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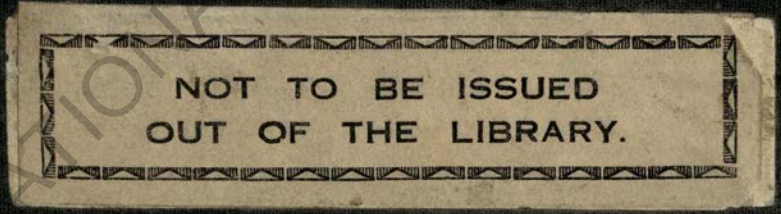
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HINDU MYTHOLOGY

Vedic & Puranic

by

W. J. Wilkins

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HINDU MYTHOLOGY,

~~S.A 300~~

VEDIC AND PURĀNIC.

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PREFACE.

one of my first inquiries was for some
count of the mythology of the Hindus;
various works in which some informa-
l was to be found, I sought in vain for
atic work on this subject. Since then
s of India have been published, one in
ndon; but though most useful books of
eet the want that this book is intended
ears I have been making notes with the
them in such a way that any one with-
gain a good general idea of the names,
f the principal gods of Hinduism. It
this work does not profess to contain
Hindu Scriptures, nor to give very much
to be found scattered in many other
original extracts have been made; but,
work has been to collect and arrange
d. It has been my earnest endeavour to
account of these deities, as far as possible
sacred books; such an account as I
-minded Hindu to give of God and His
dy of the Bible. I have honestly striven
om prejudice and theological bias, and
books speak for themselves, have re-
ng on the passages quoted, excepting

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in cases where some explanation seem
not selected those texts which describe
of the Hindu gods, nor have such been
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things commonly believed by millions
subjects.

In order to render the work more inte
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introduced. Most of them have been cop
by the Hindus themselves, and which
houses of the people. No attempt ha
them; they are, what they profess to be,
of the designs of Hindu artists. For th
these drawings from the original highly
very greatly indebted to my friends t
B.A., and Messrs. H. T. Ottewill and C.

By the introduction of a full index it
work will serve as a classical dictiona
classification of the gods will enable t
general view of Hindu mythology, and
one deity stands to others. And as ma
some length, the book can hardly fail
general reader, who may not have time
to the sacred writings from which they a

A word of explanation respecting t
deities is called for. It will be notic
described as belonging to the Vedic Age
or other names in the Purānas; whilst oth
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following are the principal works from which materials for olume have been taken:—

iginal Sanskrit Texts.' 5 vols. J. Muir, D.C.L., LL.D. on, 1868.

e Vishnu Purāna.' H. H. Wilson. London, 1840.

e Rāmāyana of Valmiki.' R. T. H. Griffiths. Benares.

dian Wisdom.' Monier Williams. London, 1875.

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View of the History, Religion, and Literature of the s.' Rev. W. Ward. Serampore, 1818.

ndu Pantheon.' Col. Moor.

nual of Buddhism.' Rev. R. S. Hardy. London, 1853.

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hambers's Cyclopædia.' Prof. Goldstucker's Articles.

UTTA, *February* 1882.

W. J. W.

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10. JAGADGAURI
11. PRATYANGIRA
12. ANNAPURNĀ
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PART I.

THE VEDIC DEITIES.

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HINDU MYTHOLOGY.

THE VEDIC DEITIES.

CHAPTER I.

THE VEDAS.

E speaking of the Vedic Deities, it is necessary that ing be said concerning the Vedas themselves, the source information respecting these deities. The root of the *vid*, "to know:" hence the term *Veda* signifies *knowledge*; at first these books were not written, it signifies know- hat is heard, or orally communicated. The Vedas are pposed to be the work of a single person, but it is believed ey were communicated to a number of Rishis or saints, their turn transmitted them to their disciples.

instruction contained in these writings is said to have reathed forth by God Himself. At other times it is said issued from Him like smoke from fire. Sometimes the are said to have sprung from the elements. The accounts r origin differ in form, but agree in teaching that they e direct gift of God to man; and hence they are regarded e greatest veneration. They are the special property of

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the Brāhmans. As early as Manu (700 B.C.) it was regard a most grave offence for a single word of these divinely works to be heard by a man of a lower caste.

The Vedas are four in number: of these the Rig-V probably the oldest, then the Yajur-Veda the Sāma- and last of all the Atharva-Veda. Each of ese Vedas co of two main parts: a Sanhita, or collection of mantras or hy and a Brāhmana, or ritualistic precept and illustration, stands in somewhat the same relation to the Sanhita a Talmud to the Law. Attached to each Brāhmana is an U shad, containing secret or mystical doctrine. The Sanhit Brāhmana are for men generally; the Upanishads are fo more philosophical inquirers. Of these Sanhitas, the "Rig Sanhita, containing one thousand and seventeen hymns, oldest and most important; whilst the Atharva-Veda-San generally held to be the most recent, and is perhaps the interesting. Moreover, these are the only two Vedic hymn- worthy of being called separate original collections;"* the being almost entirely made up of extracts from the Rig-V

The Sanhitas of three of the Vedas are said to have peculiarity. "If a mantra is metrical, and intended fo recitation, it is called *Rich* (from *rich*, praise), whence th Rig-Veda; *i.e.* the Veda containing such praises. If it i (and then it must be muttered inaudibly), it is called *Yaj* sacrifice, hence, literally, the means by which sacrifice is eff therefore Yajur-Veda signifies the Veda containing such And if it is metrical and intended for chanting, it is *Sāman* [equal]; hence Sāman Veda means the Veda con such *Sāmans*. The author of the Mantra, or, as the would say, the inspired 'Seer,' who received it from the D termed its *Rishi*; and the object with which it is concern *devata*—a word which generally means a 'deity,' but the ing of which, in its reference to *mantras*, must not alw taken literally, as there are hymns in which not gods or beings, but, for instance, a sacrificial post, weapons, &c., in

* 'Indian Wisdom,' p. 9.

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are considered as the *devata*." * It is generally believed that the Brāhmanas are much more recent than the Sanhitas.

The Vedas have not come down to the present time without considerable dispute as to the text. As might have been expected, when this teaching was given orally, discrepancies arose. One account mentions no less than twenty-one schools (Sākhās) of the Rig-Veda: another gives five of the Rig-Veda, forty-two of the Yajur-Veda; mentions twelve out of a thousand of the Sāman-Veda, and twelve of the Atharva-Veda. And as each school believed that it possessed the true Veda, it anathematized those who taught and followed any other version. The Rig-Veda Sanhita that has come down to the present age is that of one school only, the Sākala; the Yajur-Veda is that of three schools; the Sāma-Veda is that of perhaps two, and the Atharva-Veda of one only.

"The history of the Yajur-Veda differs in so far from that of the other Vedas, as it is marked by a dissension between its own schools far more important than the differences which separated *the* school of each [of the] other Vedas. It is known by the distinction between a Yajur-Veda called the Black—and another called the White—Yajur-Veda. Tradition, especially that of the Purānas, records a legend to account for it. Vaisampāyana, it says, the disciple of Vyāsa, who had received from him the Yajur-Veda, once having committed an offence, desired his disciples to assist him in the performance of some expiatory act. One of these, however, Yājnavalkya, proposed that he should alone perform the whole rite; upon which Vaisampāyana, enraged at what he considered to be the arrogance of Yājnavalkya, uttered a curse on him, the effect of which was that Yājnavalkya disgorged all the Yajus texts he had learned from Vaisampāyana. The other disciples, having been meanwhile transformed into partridges (*tittiri*), picked up these tainted texts and retained them. Hence these texts are called Taittiriyas. But Yājnavalkya, desirous of obtaining Yajus texts, devoutly

* Goldstucker, art. "Vedas," Chambers's Cyclopædia.

prayed to the Sun, and had granted to him his wish,—'to possess such texts as were not known to his teacher.'" * And thus there are two Yajur-Vedas to this day; the Black being considered the older of the two.

As to the date of the Vedas, there is nothing certainly known. There is no doubt that they are amongst the oldest literary productions in the world; but as to when they were composed all is conjecture. Colebrooke seems to show from a Vaidick Calendar, that they must have been written before the 14th century B.C. Some assign to them a more recent, some a more ancient date.

* Goldstücker, art. "Vedas," Chambers's Cyclopædia.

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CHAPTER II.

THE VEDIC GODS GENERALLY.

YĀSKA (probably the oldest Commentator on the Vedas) gives the following classification of the Vedic gods:—"There are three deities, according to the expounders of the Vedas: Agni, whose place is on the earth; Vāyu or Indra, whose place is in the air; and Surya, whose place is in the sky. These deities receive several many appellations, in consequence of their greatness or of the diversity of their functions." * In the Rig-Veda itself this number is increased to thirty-three: "Agni, the wise god, lends an ear to his worshippers. God with the ruddy steeds, who lovest praise, bring hither those three-and-thirty." This is the number commonly mentioned, though it is by no means easy to decide which are the thirty-three intended, as the lists of the gods vary considerably; whilst in another verse it is said, that "three hundred, three thousand, thirty-and-nine gods have worshipped Agni."

The deities are spoken of as immortal, but are not said to [be] existent beings; in fact, their parentage in most cases [is] though the various accounts of their origin do not [a]gh each other, as found in different parts of the Vedas. [A]nd Savitri are said to have conferred immortality upon [them]; whilst it is taught that Indra obtained this boon by [sacrifice]. An interesting account is given in the 'Satapatha [Brāhma]na' † of the means by which the gods obtained immor[tality] and superiority over the Asusas or Demons. All the

* [Mu]ir, O. S. T., v. p. 8. † Ibid. iv. 54–62.

gods were alike mortal, all were equal in power, all were alike sons of Prajāpati the Creator. Wishing to be immortal, they offered sacrifices liberally, and practised the severest penance; but not until Prajāpati had taught them to offer a particular sacrifice could they become immortal. They followed his advice, and gained the desired boon. Wishing to become greater than the Asuras, they became truthful. Previously they and the Asuras spoke truthfully or falsely as they thought fit; but gradually they ceased from lying, whilst the Asuras became increasingly false: the result was, that the gods after protracted struggles gained the victory. Of the gods, originally all were alike in power, all alike good; but three of them desired to be superior to the rest, viz. Agni, Indra, and Surya. They continued to offer sacrifices for this purpose until it was accomplished. Originally there was not in Agni the same flame as there is now. He desired, "May this flame be in me," and offered a sacrifice for the attainment of this blessing, and obtained it. So Indra increased his energy, and Surya his brightness.

It will be noticed that each of the gods in turn is regarded by the worshipper as superior to all the others, and in the Vedas this superlative language is employed, and the identical epithets are given indiscriminately. Professor Max Müller says: "When these individual gods are invoked, they are not conceived as limited by the power of others, as superior or inferior in rank. Each god, to the mind of the supplicants, is as good as all the gods. He is felt at the time as a real di[illegible], as supreme and absolute, in spite of the limitations which [illegible] mind, a plurality of gods must entail on every single g[illegible] the rest disappear for a moment from the vision of the [illegible] he only who is to fulfil their desires stands in full ligh[illegible] the eyes of the worshippers. . . . It would be easy t[illegible] the numerous hymns of the Rig-Veda, passages in whic[illegible] every single god is represented as supreme and absolute."

The will of these gods is sovereign; no mortal ca[illegible] their designs. They exercise authority over all creat[illegible] their hands is the life of mortals. They know the thou[illegible]

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intentions of men; and whilst they reward their worshippers, they punish those who neglect them.

|| Professor Williams says,* "that the deified forces addressed in the Vedic hymns were probably not represented by images or idols in the Vedic period, though doubtless the early worshippers clothed their gods with human forms in their own imaginations." Professor Max Muller† speaks more positively: "The religion of the Veda knows of no idols. The worship of idols in India is a secondary formation, a later degradation of the more primitive worship of ideal gods." The guarded language of Professor Williams seems to be better suited to the facts, as far as they are known, for Dr. Bollensen‡ speaks quite as strongly on the other side. He writes: "From the common appellation of the gods as *divo naras*, 'men of the sky,' or simply *naras*, 'men,' and from the epithet *nripesas*, 'having the form of men,' we may conclude that the Indians did not merely in imagination assign human forms to their gods, but also represented them in a sensible manner. Thus a painted image of Rudra (Rig-Veda, ii. 33, 9) is described 'with strong limbs, many-formed, awful, brown; he is painted with shining colours.'" "Still clearer appears the reference to representations in the form of an image. 'I now pray to the gods of these (Maruts).' Here it seems that the Maruts are distinguished from their gods, *i.e.* 'their images.'" "There is in the oldest language a word, '*Sandris*,' which properly denotes 'an image of the gods.'"

We shall now proceed to the consideration in detail of the deities as described in the Vedas.

* 'Indian Wisdom,' p. 15. † 'Chips from a German Workshop,' i. 38.
‡ Muir, O. S. T., v. 453.

CHAPTER III.

DYAUS AND PRITHIVI.

THE general opinion respecting Dyaus (Heaven) and Prithivi (Earth) is that they are amongst the most ancient of the Aryan deities: hence they are spoken of in the hymns of the Rig-Veda as the parents of the other gods.* They are described as "great, wise, and energetic;" those who "promote righteousness, and lavish gifts upon their worshippers." And in another place they are said to have "made all creatures," and through their favour "immortality is conferred upon their offspring." Not only are they the creators, but also the preservers of all creatures; and are beneficent and kind to all. In other passages Heaven and Earth are said to have been formed by Indra, who is declared to transcend them in greatness, whom they follow "as a chariot follows the horse." They are described as bowing down before him; as trembling with fear on account of him; and as being subject to his control. Again they are said to have been formed by Soma; and in other verses other deities are said to have made them. This confusion of thought respecting the origin of these gods led very naturally to the question being asked in other hymns, "How have they been produced? Who of the sages knows?"

There seems to be considerable ground for the opinion that Indra gradually superseded Dyaus in the worship of the Hindus soon after their settlement in India. As the praises of the newer god were sung, the older one was forgotten; and in

* Muir, O. S. T., v. 23.

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the present day, whilst Dyaus is almost unknown, Indra is worshipped, though in the Vedas both are called the god of Heaven. The following statement of Professor Benfey* gives a natural explanation of this:—"It may be distinctly shown that Indra took the place of the god of Heaven, who, in the Vedas, is invoked in the vocative as Dyauspitar (Heaven-father). This is proved by the fact that this phrase is exactly reflected in the Latin Jupiter, and the Greek Zeū-pater as a religious formula, fixed, like many others, before the separation of the languages. When the Sanskrit people left the common country where for them, as well as for other kindred tribes, the brilliant radiance of heaven appeared to them, in consequence of the climate there prevailing, as the holiest thing, and settled in sultry India (where the glow of the heavens is destructive, and only its rain operates beneficially), this aspect of the Deity must have appeared the most adorable, so that the epithet Pluvius, in a certain sense, absorbed all the other characteristics of Dyauspitar. This found its expression in the name In-dra, in which we unhesitatingly recognise a word (which arose in some local dialect, and was then diffused with the spread of the worship) standing for Sind-ra, which again was derived from Syand, 'to drop.' The conceptions which had been attached to Dyaus were then transferred to Indra." The opinion that Indra has taken the place of Dyáus is now pretty generally believed, and certainly the above explanation appears to be very natural.

Of Prithivi we hear again. The 'Vishnu Purāna'† gives the following account of her birth:—There was a king named Venā, notorious for his wickedness and neglect of religious duties. When the Rishis of that age could bear with his impiety no longer, they slew him. But now a worse evil happened; anarchy prevailed, and they felt that a bad king was better than none at all. Upon this they rubbed the thigh of Venā, and there came forth a black dwarf, like a negro in appearance. Immediately after his birth this dwarf asked, "What am I to do?" He is told, "Nisida" (sit down), and from this his

* Muir, O. S. T., v. 18. † Page 103.

descendants are called 'Nishidis' unto this day. The corpse was now pure, as all sin had left it in this black body. The right arm was then rubbed, and from it there came a beautiful shining prince, who was named Prithu, and reigned in the place of his father. Now during his reign there was a famine. Earth would not yield her fruits, and great distress prevailed. Prithu said, "I will slay the Earth, and make her yield her fruits." Terrified at this threat, the Earth assumed the form of a cow, and was pursued by Prithu through space, even to the heaven of Brahmā. At length, weary with the chase, she turned to Prithu and said, "Know you not the sin of killing a female that you thus try to slay me?" The king replied that, "when the happiness of many is secured by the destruction of one malignant being, the death of that being is an act of virtue." "But," said the Earth, "if, in order to promote the welfare of your subjects, you put an end to me, whence, best of monarchs, will thy people derive their support?" Overcome at length, the Earth declared that all vegetable products were old, and destroyed by her, but that at the king's command she would restore them "as developed from her milk." "Do you therefore, for the benefit of mankind, give me that calf by which I may be able to secrete milk. Make also all places level, so that I may cause my milk, the seed of all vegetation, to flow everywhere around."

Prithu acted upon this advice of the Earth. "Before his time there was no cultivation, no pasture, no agriculture, no highway for merchants; all these things (or all civilization) originated in the reign of Prithu. Where the ground was made level, the king induced his subjects to take up their abode. . . . He, therefore, having made Swayambhuva Manu the calf, milked the Earth, and received the milk into his own hand, for the benefit of mankind. Thence proceeded all kinds of corn and vegetables upon which people now subsist. By granting life to the Earth, Prithu was as her father, and she thence derived the patronymic appellation Prithivi."

In a note Professor Wilson adds,* the commentator observes

* 'Vishnu Purāna,' p. 104.

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hat "by the 'calf,' or Manu in that character, is typified the promoter of the multiplication of progeny;" Manu, as will be seen in the account of the Creation, being regarded by some of the Purānas as the first parent of mankind. This legend, with considerable variation, is found in most of the Purānas: Soma, Indra, Yama, and others taking the place of Manu as the calf; whilst Prithu's place as the milker is taken by the Rishis, Mitra, etc. In the same note Professor Wilson says: "These are all probably subsequent modifications of the original simple allegory, which typified the earth as a cow, who yielded to every class of beings the milk that they desired, or the object of their wishes."

It should be noticed that, later on in the 'Vishnu Purāna,' Prithivi is said to have sprung from the foot of Vishnu.

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CHAPTER IV.

ADITI AND THE ĀDITYAS.

ADITI has the honour of being almost the only goddess mentioned by name in the Rig-Veda, as the mother of any of the gods; but it is by no means an easy task to delineate her character, as the most contradictory statements are made concerning her. She was invoked as the bestower of blessings on children and cattle; and she is clearly declared to be the mother of Varuna, and other deities, sometimes eight, sometimes twelve in number. She is supposed to be the *impersonation* of "infinity, especially the boundlessness of heaven, in opposition to the finiteness of earth." Another supposition is that Aditi is the personification of "universal, all-embracing nature or Being." This latter idea seems to be the more correct from the following verses,* where a man about to be immolated says, "Of which god, now, of which of the immortals shall we invoke the amiable name, who may give us back to the great Aditi, that I may behold my father and my mother?" Whatever may have been intended by the poets to be expressed by this name, or whatever may have been the precise power personified by Aditi, she is connected with the forgiveness of sin. Thus: "May Aditi make us sinless." "Aditi be gracious, if we have committed any sin against you." "Whatever offence we have, O Agni, through our folly committed against you, oh, most youthful god, make us free from sins against Aditi." "Whatever sin we have committed may Aditi sever us from it."†

* Muir, O. S. T., v. 45. † Ibid. v. 46, 47.

In the account of the Creation given in the Rig-Veda, Aditi is said to have sprung from Daksha, and in the same verse Daksha is called her son. There is also a reference to her other sons. In the 'Vishnu Purāna' we have no less than three somewhat differing accounts of the origin of Daksha, the father of Aditi. In the first account, Daksha's name appears amongst the mind-born sons of Brahmā; and in this connection he is said to have had twenty-four daughters, but Aditi is not mentioned as one of them. In the second account of Daksha, Aditi is said to have been one of his sixty daughters, and was given in marriage to Kasyapa, by whom she had twelve sons, the Adityas. Elsewhere we read that Vishnu, when incarnate as the Dwarf, was a result of this marriage. In the third account of Daksha, Aditi is again mentioned as his daughter, and the mother of Vivasat (the Sun). The sons of Aditi are termed

THE ADITYAS.

This name signifies simply the descendants of Aditi. In one passage in the Rig-Veda* the names of six are given: Mitra, Aryman, Bhaga, Varuna, Daksha, and Amsa. In another passage they are said to be seven in number, though their names are not given. In a third verse eight is the number given; but "of the eight sons of Aditi who were born from her body, she approached the gods with seven, and cast out Mārtānda (the eighth)."† As the lists of names of these sons given in different parts of the Vedas do not agree with each other, it is difficult to know who were originally regarded as Ādityas. Judging from the number of hymns addressed to them, some of these deities occupied a conspicuous position in the Vedic pantheon; whilst others are named once or twice only, and then in connection with their more illustrious brethren. In the Satapatha Brāhmana,‡ and the Purānas, the number of the Adityas is increased to twelve. In addition to the six whose

* Muir, O. S. T., v. 54. † Ibid. v. 49.

names are given above, the following are also described in so hymns of the Rig-Veda as the offspring of Aditi: Surya, "as Aditya identified with Agni, is said to have been placed by t gods in the sky;" * Savitri, and Indra too, is in one passa addressed as an Aditya along with Varuna and the Moon. the Taittiriya texts, the following eight are described Adityas:—Mitra, Varuna, Aryaman, Amsu, Bhaga, Indra, a Vivasvat (Surya).

Professor Roth says † of these deities: "In the highest heav dwell and reign those gods who bear in common the name Adityas. We must, however, if we would discover their earlie character, abandon the conceptions which in a later age, a even in that of the heroic poems, were entertained regardi these deities. According to this conception, they were twel Sun-gods, there being evident reference to the twelve mont But for the most ancient period we must hold fast to the prim significance of their names. They are inviolable, imperisha eternal things. Aditi, Eternity, or The Eternal, is the elem which sustains them, or is sustained by them. The eternal inviolable element in which the Adityas dwell, and which fo their essence, is the celestial light. The Adityas, the god this light, do not therefore by any means coincide with an the forms in which light is manifested in the universe. They neither the sun, nor moon, nor stars, nor dawn, but the etern sustainers of this luminous life, which exists as it were behin these phenomena."

As noticed above, the text of the Rig-Vedas says, ‡ "Of t eight sons who were born from the body of Aditi, she approach the gods with seven, but cast away the eighth." In the co mentary, the following explanation of this circumstance is give —"The eighth son was deformed. His brothers, seeing his d formity, improved his appearance. He was afterwards know as Vivasvat (the Sun). From the superfluous flesh cut off h body an elephant was formed: hence the proverb, 'Let no m

* Muir, O. S. T., v. 54. † Ibid. v. 56.
‡ Ibid. v. 49.

atch an elephant, for the elephant partakes of the nature of gan.'"

According to a passage quoted in Chapter II.* from the Satapatha Brāhmana,' Agni, Indra, and Surya obtained superiority over the other gods by means of sacrifice. By whatever means this position was attained, it is certain that these were the most popular deities of the Vedic Age. Agni stands in a class by himself; but with Indra and Surya there are other deities closely associated, and possessing very similar attributes. Nearly the whole of the more conspicuous Vedic deities may be classified as follows:—I. Agni, the god of Fire; II. Sun Gods, or gods of Light; and III. Storm Gods, or those associated with Indra.

* Page 8.

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CHAPTER V.

AGNI.

AGNI,* the god of Fire, is one of the most prominent of t deities of the Vedas. With the single exception of Indra, m hymns are addressed to him than to any other deity. Profes Williams gives the following spirited description of Agni: —

> "Bright, seven-rayed god, how manifold thy shapes
> Revealed to us thy votaries; now we see thee
> With body all of gold; and radiant hair
> Flaming from three terrific heads, and mouths,
> Whose burning jaws and teeth devour all things.
> Now with a thousand glowing horns, and now
> Flashing thy lustre from a thousand eyes,
> Thou'rt borne towards us in a golden chariot,
> Impelled by winds, and drawn by ruddy steeds,
> Marking thy car's destructive course with blackness." †

Various accounts are given of the origin of Agni. He is said be a son of Dyaus and Prithivi; he is called the son of Brahm and is then named Abhimani; and he is reckoned amongst t children of Kasyapa and Aditi, and hence one of the Adity In the later writings he is described as a son of Angiras, kin the Pitris (fathers of mankind), and the authorship of sev hymns is ascribed to him. In pictures he is represented a red man, having three legs and seven arms, dark eyes, e

* Brihaspati and Brahmanaspati are generally regarded as being iden with Agni. Nearly the same epithets are applied to them, with this ditional one—of presiding over prayer; although in some few passages t are addressed as separate deities.

† 'Indian Wisdom,' p. 18.

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ows and hair. He rides on a ram, wears a poita (Brāhmanical read), and a garland of fruit. Flames of fire issue from his outh, and seven streams of glory radiate from his body. The llowing passage, for every sentence of which Dr. Muir * quotes text from the Vedas, gives a good idea of the character and nctions of this deity in the Vedic Age.

AGNI.

Agni is an immortal who has taken up his abode with mortals their guest. He is the domestic priest who rises before the n, and who concentrates in his own person and exercises in igher sense all the various sacrificial offices which the Indian al assigns to a number of different human functionaries. He a sage, the divinest among the sages, intimately acquainted th all the forms of worship; the wise director, the successful

* Muir, O. S. T., v. 119 ff.

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accomplisher, and the protector of all ceremonies, who enabl men to serve the gods in a correct and acceptable manner, cases where they could not do this with their own unaided ski He is a swift messenger, moving between heaven and eart commissioned, both by gods and men to maintain their mutu communication, to announce to the immortals the hymns, and convey to them the oblations of their worshippers; or to bri them (the immortals) down from the sky to the place of sacrifi He accompanies the gods when they visit the earth, and shar in the reverence and adoration which they receive. He mak the oblations fragrant; without him the gods experience satisfaction.

Agni is the lord, protector, king of men. He is the lor the house, dwelling in every abode. He is a guest in ev home; he despises no man, he lives in every family. H therefore considered as a mediator between gods and men, as a witness of their actions; hence to the present day h worshipped, and his blessing sought on all solemn occasion at marriage, death, &c. In these old hymns Agni is spoken o dwelling in the two pieces of wood, which being rubbed toge produce fire; and it is noticed as a remarkable thing tha living being should spring out of dry (dead) wood. Strange say, says the poet, the child, as soon as born, begins w unnatural voracity to consume his parents. Wonderful is growth, seeing that he is born of a mother who cannot nour him; but he is nourished by the oblations of clarified but which are poured into his mouth, and which he consumes.

The highest divine functions are ascribed to Agni. Althoug some places he is spoken of as the son of heaven and earth others he is said to have stretched them out; to have form them, and all that flies or walks, or stands or moves. He form the sun, and adorned the heaven with stars. Men tremble his mighty deeds, and his ordinances cannot be resisted. Ea heaven, and all things obey his commands. All the gods fe and do homage to him. He knows the secrets of mortals, ar hears the invocations that are addressed to him.

The worshippers of Agni prosper, are wealthy, and live lon

watches with a thousand eyes over the man who brings him
d, and nourishes him with oblations. No mortal enemy can
any wondrous power gain the mastery over him who sacrifices
his god. He also confers and is the guardian of immortality.
a funeral hymn, Agni is asked to warm with his heat the
rn (immortal) part of the deceased, and in his auspicious
to carry it to the world of the righteous. He carries men
s calamities, as a ship over the sea. He commands all the
s in earth and heaven; hence he is invoked for riches, food,
erance, and in fact all temporal good. He is also prayed to
e forgiver of sins that may have been committed through
All gods are said to be comprehended in him; he sur-
ls them as the circumference of a wheel does the spokes.
e main characteristics of this deity are taught in the
wing verses by Dr. Muir:*—

"Great Agni, though thine essence be but one,
Thy forms are three; as fire thou blazest here,
As lightning flashest in the atmosphere,
In heaven thou flamest as the golden sun.

"It was in heaven thou hadst thy primal birth;
By art of sages skilled in sacred lore
Thou wast drawn down to human hearths of yore,
And thou abid'st a denizen of earth.

"Sprung from the mystic pair,† by priestly hands
In wedlock joined, forth flashes Agni bright;
But, oh! ye heavens and earth, I tell you right,
The unnatural child devours the parent brands.

"But Agni is a god; we must not deem
That he can err, or dare to comprehend
His acts, which far our reason's grasp transcend;
He best can judge what deeds a god beseem.

"And yet this orphaned god himself survives;
Although his hapless mother soon expires,
And cannot nurse the babe as babe requires,
Great Agni, wondrous infant, grows and thrives.

* Muir, O. S. T., v. 221.
† The two pieces of wood from which fire is produced.

"Smoke-bannered Agni, god with crackling voice
And flaming hair, when thou dost pierce the gloom
At early dawn, and all the world illume,
Both heaven and earth and gods and men rejoice.

"In every home thou art a welcome guest,
The household tutelary lord, a son,
A father, mother, brother, all in one,
A friend by whom thy faithful friends are blest.

"A swift-winged messenger, thou callest down
From heaven to crowd our hearths the race divine,
To taste our food, our hymns to hear, benign,
And all our fondest aspirations crown.

"Thou, Agni, art our priest: divinely wise,
In holy science versed, thy skill detects
The faults that mar our rites, mistakes corrects,
And all our acts completes and sanctifies.

"Thou art the cord that stretches to the skies,
The bridge that scans the chasm, profound and vast,
Dividing earth from heaven, o'er which at last
The good shall safely pass to Paradise.

"But when, great god, thine awful anger glows,
And thou revealest thy destroying force,
All creatures flee before thy furious course,
As hosts are chased by overpowering foes.

"Thou levellest all thou touchest; forests vast
Thou shear'st, like beards which barber's razor shaves;
Thy wind-driven flames roar loud as ocean's waves,
And all thy track is black when thou hast past.

"But thou, great Agni, dost not always wear
That direful form; thou rather lov'st to shine
Upon our hearths, with milder flame benign,
And cheer the homes where thou art nursed with care.

"Yes! thou delightest all those men to bless
Who toil unwearied to supply the food
Which thou so lovest;—logs of well-dried wood,
And heaps of butter bring, thy favourite mess.

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"Though I no cow possess, and have no store
Of butter, nor an axe fresh wood to cleave,
Thou, gracious god, wilt my poor gift receive:
These few dry sticks I bring;—I have no more.

"Preserve us, lord; thy faithful servants save
From all the ills by which our bliss is marred;
Tower like an iron wall our homes to guard,
And all the boons bestow our hearts can crave.

"And when away our brief existence wanes,
When we at length our earthly homes must quit,
And our freed souls to worlds unknown shall flit,
Do thou deal gently with our cold remains.

"And then, thy gracious form assuming, guide
Our unborn part across the dark abyss
Aloft to realms serene of light and bliss,
Where righteous men among the gods abide."

"In a celebrated hymn of the Rig-Veda, attributed to Visishtha, Indra and the other gods are called upon to destroy the *Kravyāds* (the flesh-eaters), or Rākshas, enemies of the gods. Agni himself is a *Kravyād*, and as such takes an entirely different character. He is represented under a form as hideous as the beings he, in common with the other gods, is called upon to devour. He sharpens his two iron tusks, puts his enemies into his mouth, and devours them. He heats the edges of his shafts, and sends them into the hearts of the Rākshasas." *

In the Mahābhārata, Agni is represented as having exhausted his vigour by devouring too many oblations, and desiring to consume the whole Khāndava forest, as a means of recruiting his strength. He was [at first] prevented from doing this by Indra; but having obtained the assistance of Krishna and Arjuna, he baffled Indra, and accomplished his object." †

According to the Rāmāyana, in order to assist Vishnu when incarnate as Rāma, Agni became the father of Nila by a monkey mother; and according to the 'Vishnu Purāna,' he married Swāhā, by whom he had three sons,—Pāvaka, Pavamāna, and Suchi.

* Dowson, 'Dictionary of Hindu Mythology.' † Dowson, *s. v.*

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Agni has many names; those more generally known are the following:—

Vahni, "He who receives the *hom*, or burnt sacrifice."
Vitihotra, "He who sanctifies the worshipper."
Dhananjaya, "He who conquers (destroys) riches."
Jivalana, "He who burns."
Dhumketu, "He whose sign is smoke."
Chhāgaratha, "He who rides on a ram."
Saptajihva, "He who has seven tongues."

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CHAPTER VI.

SUN OR LIGHT DEITIES.

1. SURYA.

SURYA and Savitri are two names by which the Sun is addressed in the Vedic hymns. Sometimes the one name is used exclusively, sometimes they are used interchangeably, and sometimes they are used as though they represented quite distinct objects. It is supposed that Savitri refers to the sun when invisible; whilst Surya refers to him when he is visible to the worshippers. This at any rate gives *some* reason for the two names being employed, though it may not explain the case satisfactorily in every instance.

Although the hymns in which Surya is addressed are not very numerous, his worship was most common in the olden time, and has continued to the present hour. It is to him that the Gayatri, the most sacred text of the Vedas, is addressed at his rising by every devout Brāhman. Simple in its phrascology, this short verse is supposed to exert magical powers. It is as follows:—

> "Let us meditate on that excellent glory of the divine Vivifier:
> May he enlighten (or stimulate) our understandings."*

As a specimen of the language employed in some of the later writings in reference to this verse, read the following few lines from the 'Skanda Purāna:'—"Nothing in the Vedas is superior to the Gayatri. No invocation is equal to the Gayatri, as no city

* 'Indian Wisdom,' p. 20.

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is equal to Kasi (Benares). The Gayatri is the mother of the Vedas, and of Brāhmans. By repeating it a man is saved. By the power of the Gayatri the Kshetriya (Warrior caste) Vishvamitra became a Brahmarsi (Brahman saint), and even obtained such power as to be able to create a new world. What is there indeed that cannot be effected by the Gayatri? For the Gayatri is Vishnu, Brahma, and Siva, and the three Vedas."* With promise of such blessing, it is not to be wondered at that the worship of Surya should continue.

SURYA.

The following translation† of hymns from the Rig-Veda gives a fair specimen of the language used in addresses to Surya:—

"Behold the rays of Dawn, like heralds, lead on high
The Sun, that men may see the great all-knowing god.
The stars slink off like thieves, in company with Night,
Before the all-seeing eye, whose beams reveal his presence,
Gleaming like brilliant flames, to nation after nation.
With speed, beyond the ken of mortals, thou, O Sun!
Dost ever travel on, conspicuous to all.
Thou dost create the light, and with it dost illume

* Kennedy's 'Hindu Mythology,' p. 345.
† 'Indian Wisdom,' p. 19.

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The universe entire; thou risest in the sight
Of all the race of men, and all the host of heaven.
Light-giving Varuna! thy piercing glance dost scan,
In quick succession, all this stirring active world,
And penetrateth too the broad ethereal space,
Measuring our days and nights, and spying out all creatures.
Surya with flaming locks, clear-sighted god of day,
Thy seven ruddy mares bear on thy rushing car.
With these, thy self-yoked steeds, seven daughters of thy chariot,
Onward thou dost advance. To thy refulgent orb
Beyond this lower gloom, and upward to the light
Would we ascend, O Sun! thou god among the gods."

Surya, as we have already noticed, is regarded as a son of Aditi; at other times he is said to be a son of Dyaus. Ushas (the Dawn) is called his wife, though in another passage he is said to be produced by the Dawn. Some texts state that he is the Vivifier of all things; whilst others state that he was formed and made to shine by Indra, Soma, Agni, and others.

From the character ascribed to Savitri in some hymns, it seems more natural to regard him as the sun shining in his strength, and Surya as the sun when rising and setting. Savitri is golden-eyed,* golden-handed, golden-tongued. He rides in a chariot drawn by radiant, white-footed steeds. He illuminates the earth; his golden arms stretched out to bless, infusing energy into all creatures, reach to the utmost ends of heaven. He is leader and king in heaven; the other gods follow him, and he it is who gives them immortality. He is prayed to for deliverance from sin, and to conduct the souls of the departed to the abode of the righteous.

In the Puranic Age, Surya sustains quite a different character. He is there called the son of Kasyapa and Aditi. He is described as a dark-red man, with three eyes and four arms: in two hands are water-lilies; with one he is bestowing a blessing, with the other he is encouraging his worshippers. He sits upon a red lotus, and rays of glory issue from his body. In addition to the daily worship that is offered to him by the Brâhmans by

* Muir, O. S. T., v. 162 ff.

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the repetition of the Gayatri, he is worshipped once a year by the Hindus, generally on the first Sunday in the month of Māgh; and in seasons of sickness it is no uncommon thing for the low-caste Hindus to employ a Brāhman to repeat some verses in honour of Surya, in the hope that the deity thus propitiated will effect their recovery.

In the 'Vishnu Purāna'* we find the following account of Surya. He married Sangnā, the daughter of Visvakarma; who, after bearing him three children, was so oppressed with his brightness and glory, that she was compelled to leave him. Before her departure, she left Chhāya (Shadow) in her place. For years Surya did not notice this change of wife. But one day, in a fit of anger, Chhāya pronounced a curse upon Yama (Death), a child of Sangnā's, and this curse took effect. Surya knew that no mother's curse could affect her offspring, and, wondering how it was that Chhāya's curse was not harmless, he came to know that his wife had forsaken him, leaving this other woman in her place. Through the power of meditation, Surya found Sangnā in a forest in the form of a mare; and, in order that he might enjoy her society, changed himself into a horse. After a few years, they grew tired of this arrangement, and returned in proper form to their own dwelling. But in order that his presence might be bearable to his wife, his father-in-law, who was the architect of the gods, ground the Sun upon a stone, and by this means reduced his brightness by one-eighth. The part thus ground from Surya was not wasted. From it were produced the wonder-working discus of Vishnu, the trident of Siva, the lance of Kārtikeya (the god of war), and the weapons of Kuvera (the god of riches).

The 'Bhavishya Purāna' says, "Because there is none greater than he (*i.e.* Surya), nor has been nor will be, therefore he is celebrated as the supreme soul in all the Vedas." Again, "that which is the sun, and thus called light or effulgent power, is adorable, and must be worshipped by those who dread successive births and deaths, and who eagerly desire beatitude." In

* Book III. chap. ii.

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the 'Brahmā Purāṇa'* is a passage in which the sun is alluded to under twelve names, with epithets peculiar to each, as though they were twelve distinct sun-deities :—

"The first form of the sun is Indra, the lord of the gods, and the destroyer of their enemies; the second, Dhata, the creator of all things; the third, Parjanya, residing in the clouds, and showering rain on the earth from its beams; the fourth, Twasta, who dwells in all corporeal forms; the fifth, Pushan, who gives nutriment to all beings; the sixth, Aryama, who brings sacrifices to a successful conclusion; the seventh derives his name from almsgiving, and delights mendicants with gifts; the eighth is called Vivasvan, who ensures digestion; the ninth, Vishnu, who constantly manifests himself for the destruction of the enemies of the gods; the tenth, Amshuman, who preserves the vital organs in a sound state; the eleventh, Varuna, who, residing in the waters, vivifies the universe; and the twelfth, Mitra, who dwells in the orb of the moon, for the benefit of the three worlds. These are the twelve splendours of the sun, the supreme spirit, who through them pervades the universe, and irradiates the inmost souls of men."

Surya is said to have Aruna (Rosy), the Dawn, as his charioteer; who was the son of Kaśyapa and Kadru.

According to the Rāmāyana, Sugriva, the king of the monkey host which assisted Rāma in his great expedition, was a son of Surya by a monkey: according to the Mahābhārata, the hero Karna also was the son of this deity; and when he was in the form of a horse, he became father of the Asvins, and communicated the white Yajur-Veda.

When speaking of the planets, Surya will be noticed again under the name of Ravi.

Among the many names and epithets by which this deity is known, the following are the most common :—

Divakara, "The Maker of the day."

Bhāskara, "The Creator of light."

Vivaswat, "The Radiant one."

* Kennedy's 'Hindu Mythology,' p. 349.

Mihira, "He who waters the earth;" *i.e.* he draws up the moisture from the seas so that the clouds are formed.

Grahapati, "The Lord of the stars."

Karmasākshi, "The witness of (men's) works."

Mārtanda, "A descendant of Mritanda."

2. PUSHAN.

Pushan is the name of a sun-god to whom some hymns are addressed exclusively, and whose praise at other times is sung in connection with that of Indra, &c. In these hymns the character of this deity is not very clearly defined. He is said * to behold the entire universe; is addressed as the guide of travellers and the protector of cattle. He is called upon to protect his servants in battle and to defend them as of old. He is invoked in the marriage ceremonial, and asked to take the bride's hand, to lead her away, and to bless her in her conjugal relations. He is said also to conduct the spirits of the departed from this world to the next. In one text he is called "the nourisher," as Vishnu in later times was called "the preserver." By far the greater number of prayers addressed to him seem to refer to him as the guide and protector of travellers, both along the ordinary journeys of life and in the longer journey to the other world; and as he is said to be constantly travelling about, he is said to know well the road by which they have to go.

The following is a specimen of the hymns addressed to Pushan in the Rig-Veda:—"Conduct us, Pushan, over our road; remove distress, son of the deliverer; go on before us. Smite away from before us the destructive and injurious wolf which seeks after us. Drive away from our path the waylayer, the thief and the robber. Tread with thy foot upon the burning weapons of that deceitful wretch, whoever he be. O wonder-working and wise Pushan, we desire that help of thine wherewith thou didst favour our fathers! O god, who bringest all blessings,

* Muir, O. S. T., v. 171 ff.

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and art distinguished by thy golden spear, make wealth easy of acquisition! Convey us past our opponents; make our paths easy to travel; gain strength for us here. Lead us over a country of rich pastures; let no new trouble (beset our) path. Bestow, satiate, grant, stimulate us, fill our belly. We do not reproach Pushan, we praise him with hymns; and we seek riches from the wonder-working god." * "May we, O Pushan! meet with a wise man who will straightway direct us and say, 'It is this.' May Pushan follow our kine; may he protect our horses; may he give us food .... Come hither, glowing god, the deliverer, may we meet." †

In the Purānas Pushan occupies a far less exalted position. It seems almost like a burlesque to see him who in the Vedas is reverently approached as the giver of good to his worshippers, described as being obliged to feed upon gruel, because his teeth have been knocked out of his mouth. The earliest form of the legend describing this event is found in the Taittiriya Sanhita. Rudra not being invited to a great sacrifice that Daksha, his father-in-law, was celebrating, shot an arrow which pierced the sacrificial victim. Pushan ate part of this victim, and it broke his teeth. In describing Daksha,‡ a full account of this sacrifice will be given. In the 'Vishnu Purāna' Pushan appears as one of the Adityas.

3. MITRA AND VARUNA.

These two deities are most frequently named together in the hymns; Varuna is often addressed alone, but Mitra very seldom. The idea of the older commentators was that Mitra represented and ruled over the day, whilst Varuna was ruler of the night. "Varuna is sometimes visible to the gaze of his worshippers; he dwells in a house having a thousand doors, so that he is ever accessible to men. He is said to have good eyesight, for he

* Muir, O. S. T., v. 175. † Ibid. v. 177.
‡ Part III. chap. i.

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knows what goes on in the hearts of men. He is king of gods and men; is mighty and terrible; none can resist his authority. He is sovereign ruler of the universe." "It is he who makes the sun to shine in heaven; the winds that blow are but his breath; he has hollowed out the channels of the rivers which

VARUNA.

flow at his command, and he has made the depths of the sea. His ordinances are fixed and unassailable; through their operation the moon walks in brightness, and the stars, which appear in the nightly sky, vanish in daylight. The birds flying in the air, the rivers in their sleepless flow, cannot attain a knowledge of his power and wrath. But he knows the flight of the birds

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in the sky, the course of the far travelling wind, the paths of ships on the ocean, and beholds all the secret things that have been or shall be done. He witnesses men's truth and falsehood."*

The following is a metrical version of one of the hymns of the Rig-Veda as given by Dr. Muir:†—

"The mighty lord on high our deeds as if at hand espies;
The gods know all men do, though men would fain their deeds disguise.
Whoe'er stands, whoe'er moves, or steals from place to place,
Or hides him in his secret cell, the gods his movements trace.
Wherever two together plot, and deem they are alone,
King Varuna is there, a third, and all their schemes are known.
This earth is his, to him belong those vast and boundless skies,
Both seas within him rest, and yet in that small pool he lies.
Whoever far beyond the sky should think his way to win,
He could not there elude the grasp of Varuna the king.
His spies descending from the skies glide all this world around;
Their thousand eyes, all scanning, sweep to earth's remotest bound.
Whate'er exists in heaven and earth, whate'er beyond the skies,
Before the eye of Varuna the king unfolded lies.
The secret winkings all he counts of every mortal's eyes;
He wields this universal frame as gamester throws his dice.
Those knotted nooses which thou fling'st, O god! the bad to snare,
All liars let them overtake, but all the truthful spare."

Professor Roth says of this hymn, "There is no hymn in the whole Vedic literature which expresses the divine omniscience in such forcible terms;" and certainly it would not be an easy task to find in any literature a passage to surpass it in this respect.

The affairs of men are under his control; he is asked to prolong life, to punish transgressors; and a hope is held out that the righteous shall see him reigning in the next world in conjunction with Yama, the ruler of the spirit-world. Varuna in fact has attributes and functions ascribed to him in the Vedas, of a higher moral character than any other of the gods; and therefore men call upon him for pardon and purity. "Release us," they say, "from the sins of our fathers, and from

* Muir, O. S. T., v. 58 ff. † Ibid. v. 64.

those which we have committed in our own persons." And again: "Be gracious, O mighty god, be gracious. I have sinned through want of power; be gracious."

In the hymns addressed to Mitra and Varuna together, almost the same terms are employed as when Varuna is addressed alone. Both are spoken of as righteous, and as the promoters of religion. They are said to avenge sin and falsehood.

In the Vedic literature, though Varuna is not regarded chiefly as the god of the ocean, as he is in the later writings, but rather, as the above hymns show, as one of the gods of light, yet there are passages which describe him as being connected with the waters of the atmosphere and on the earth, which afford some foundation for the later conceptions of his kingdom. Thus, for instance, we read, "May the waters which are celestial, and those which flow; those for which channels are dug, and those which are self-produced; those which are proceeding to the ocean, and are bright and purifying, preserve me! May those (waters) in the midst of which King Varuna goes . . . preserve me!"* In other places he is said to dwell in the waters as Soma does in the woods. Professor Roth gives a probable explanation as to the manner in which Varuna, who was originally the god of the heavens, came to be regarded as the god of the ocean. He says:† "When, on the one hand, the conception of Varuna as the all-embracing heaven had been established, and, on the other hand, the observation of the rivers flowing towards the ends of the earth and to the sea had led to the conjecture that there existed an ocean enclosing the earth in its bosom, then the way was thoroughly prepared for connecting Varuna with the ocean."

In the Brâhmana of the Rig-Veda‡ is an interesting legend showing that probably human sacrifices were at one time offered to Varuna. A certain king named Harischandra had no son. Being greatly distressed on this account, as a son is necessary to the due performance of the funeral ceremonies, the king,

* Muir, O. S. T., v. 73. † Ibid. v. 75.
‡ 'Indian Wisdom,' p. 29.

acting upon the advice of Narada the sage, went to Varuna, saying:—

"Let but a son be born, O king! to me,
And I will sacrifice that son to thee."

Varuna heard the prayer, and granted a son. When the boy grew up, his father told him of the vow he had made; but unfortunately the son was not willing to be sacrificed, and left his home. Varuna, not being at all pleased at the non-fulfilment of the king's vow, afflicted him with dropsy. For six years the boy wandered in the forest; at length, happening to meet with a poor Brāhman with his three sons, the prince proposed to purchase one of them to offer to the god as a substitute for himself. The father could not give up his first-born, the mother would not yield her youngest; the middle one was therefore taken. The prince then returned home, taking with him the Brāhman's son. At first the king was delighted at the prospect of being able to keep his promise to the deity, but a difficulty now arose as to who would slay the boy. After some time, on the consideration of a large present being made to him, the boy's father consented to do this. The boy was bound, the father ready to strike, when the boy asked permission to recite some texts in praise of the gods. Of course this was granted; and as a result the deities thus lauded were so pleased with the boy's piety, that they interceded with Varuna to spare him. Varuna granted their request, suffered the boy to live, and Harischandra recovered from his sickness.

In the Purānas Varuna is described as the god of the ocean. After a great conflict between the powers of heaven and earth, when order was again restored, the 'Vishnu Purāna' records the position assigned to the various deities. In that account Varuna is said to rule over the waters. In the same Purāna we read that an old Brāhman named Richika was most anxious to obtain in marriage a daughter of King Gādhi, who was really an incarnation of Indra. Gādhi refused to give his daughter to Richika except on one condition: that he would present him with a thousand fleet horses, each having one white ear. Horses of this colour

were special favourites of Indra; all horses sacrificed to him having this peculiarity. The Brāhman is said to have propitiated Varuna, the god of the ocean, who gave him the thousand steeds, by means of which he was able to obtain the princess in marriage.

Varuna is represented in pictures as a white man sitting upon a fabulous marine monster called a *makara*. This animal has the head and legs of an antelope, and the body and tail of a fish. In his right hand he carries a noose. He is worshipped in seasons of drought, and by fishermen as they cast their nets, but nowadays no images of him are made.

The following legend is found in the 'Padma Purāna.'* On one occasion Rāvana was travelling to his home in Ceylon, carrying with him a stone *linga*, the emblem of Siva. He was desirous of setting up the worship of Siva there, and was taking this image from the Himalayas for that purpose. But the gods, fearing he would grow too powerful through his devotion to Siva, wished to frustrate his purpose. Siva in giving this stone to Rāvana made him promise that wherever it first touched the ground, after leaving Siva's abode, it *should there* remain. Aware of this fact, the gods tried to induce him to rest it upon the earth before he reached Ceylon. At last it was agreed that Varuna should enter Rāvana's body, so that, in attempting to free himself from him, he might be compelled to loose his hold of the *linga*. Accordingly Varuna entered Rāvana, and caused him such intense pain that he could scarcely bear it. When he was thus suffering, Indra, in the form of an old Brāhman, passed by, and offered to take hold of the stone. No sooner did Rāvana entrust it to him, than he let it fall to the ground. It is said that it sank through the earth, the top of it being visible at Baidyanāth in Birbhum to this day. The river Khursu is said to have taken its rise from Varuna when he left Rāvana at this place; and as a result, the Hindus will not drink of its waters.

Although Varuna is described in the Vedas as a holy being, according to the teaching of the Purānas, his heaven is a place

* 'Ward on the Hindoos,' i. 57.

of sensual delights. He sits with his queen Varuni on a throne of diamonds; Samudra (the sea), Ganga (the Ganges), and the gods and goddesses of different rivers, lakes, springs, &c., form his court. And stories are told of conduct the very opposite of what would be expected in one who once was addressed in such language as is addressed to him in the Vedic hymns. He is said, conjointly with Surya, to have been enamoured of Urvasi, a nymph of Indra's heaven, by whom they had a son named Agastya, one of the most eminent of Hindu ascetics.

Varuna is also known as Prachetas, the wise; Jalapati, the lord of water; Yādapati, the lord of aquatic animals; Amburāja, the king of waters; Pasī, the noose-carrier.

4. THE ASVINS.

From the hymns addressed to these deities it is not at all easy to know who or what they are. Yāska, the commentator of the Vedas, deriving the name from a root meaning "to fill," says they are called Asvins because they pervade everything, the one with light, the other with moisture. Another commentator says they are called Asvins because they ride upon horses. Some say that by them heaven and earth are indicated; others that they are day and night; others, again, that they are the sun and moon. Professor Roth says, "They hold a perfectly distinct position in the entire body of the Vedic deities of light. They are the earliest bringers of light in the morning sky, who hasten on in the clouds before the Dawn and prepare the way for her."* In some hymns they are said to be sons of the sun (*vide* Surya); in others are called children of the sky; in others, again, as the offspring of the ocean. They seem to represent the transition from night to morning,—night when it is passing into day.

The Asvins are said to have had Suryā, the daughter of Savitri, as their common wife. She chose them, as her life was very lonely. Her father had intended her to marry Soma; but

* Muir, O. S. T., v. 235.

as the gods were anxious to obtain so beautiful a bride, it was agreed that they should run a race, Surya being the prize of the winner. The Asvins were successful, and she ascended their chariot.* In another passage Soma is said to have been her husband; the Asvins being friends of the bridegroom.

The Asvins are regarded as the physicians of the gods; and are declared to be able to restore to health the blind, the sick, the lame, and the emaciated amongst mortals. They are the special guardians of the slow and backward; the devoted friends of elderly women who are unmarried. They are said to preside over love and marriage, and are implored to bring together hearts that love.†

A number of legends are found illustrating the power of the Asvins in healing the sick and assisting those in trouble, from which we learn that they could restore youth and vigour to the aged and decrepit; they rescued a man from drowning, and carried him in safety to his home. The leg of Vispalā that was cut off in battle, they replaced by an iron one. At the request of a wolf, they restored sight to a man who had been *blinded* by his father, as a punishment for slaughtering a hundred and one sheep, and giving them to the wolf to eat. They restored sight and power to walk to one who was blind and lame. As a result of these and other similar legends, the Asvins are invoked for "offspring, wealth, victory, destruction of enemies, the preservation of the worshippers themselves, of their houses and cattle."

The following legend of the cure they effected on Chyavana, from the 'Satapatha Brāhmana,'‡ will illustrate the peculiar features of the work of the Asvins:—Chyavana, having assumed a shrivelled form, was abandoned by his family. Saryāta with his tribe settled in the neighbourhood; when his sons seeing the body of Chyavana, but not knowing that it was a human being, pelted it with stones. Chyavana naturally resented this, and sowed dissension amongst the family of Saryāta. Unable to learn the cause of this, Saryāta inquired of the shepherds near

* Muir, O. S. T., v. 236. † Ibid. v. 234. ‡ Ibid. v. 250.

if they had seen anything that could account for it; they told him that his sons had insulted Chyavana. Saryāta knowing that it was the Rishi who had caused the quarrels amongst his sons, took his daughter Sukanyā in his chariot, and, apologising for what had been done, gave his daughter as a peace-offering.

Now the Asvins were in the habit of wandering about the world performing cures, and, seeing Sukanyā, they were delighted with her and wished to seduce her. They said, "What is that shrivelled body by which you are lying? leave him and follow us." She replied that whilst he lived she would not leave the man to whom her father had given her. When they came to her a second time, acting on her husband's suggestion she said, "You speak contemptuously of my husband, whilst you are incomplete and imperfect yourselves," and, only on condition that they make her husband young again, will she consent to tell them in what respect they are imperfect and incomplete. Upon this they tell her to take her husband to a certain pond; after bathing there, he came forth with his youth renewed. Sukanyā tells the Asvins that they are imperfect because they have not been invited to join the other gods in a great sacrifice that was to be celebrated at Kurukshetra. The Asvins proceed to this sacrifice, and, asking to be allowed to join in it, are told that they cannot do so, because they have wandered familiarly among men, performing cures. In reply to this, the Asvins declared that the gods were making a headless sacrifice. The gods inquiring how this can be, the Asvins reply, "Invite us to join you, and we will tell you." To this the gods consented.

In another account of this legend, it is said that, as the Asvins were physicians, they were consequently unclean; hence no Brāhman must be a physician, or he is thereby unfitted for the work of a priest; but as the work of the Asvins was necessary, they were purified, and then allowed to join with gods. They then restored the head of the sacrifice.

Professor Goldstücker* says, "The myth of the Asvins is one

* Chambers's 'Cyclopædia.'

of that class of myths in which two distinct elements the cosmical and the human or historical, have gradually become blended into one. . . . The historical or human element in it, I believe, is represented by those legends which refer to the wonderful cures effected by the Asvins, and to their performances of a kindred sort; the cosmical element is that relating to their luminous nature. The link which connects both seems to be the mysteriousness of the nature and effects of light and of the healing art at a remote antiquity. It would appear that these Asvins, like the Ribhus, were originally renowned mortals, who, in the course of time, were translated into the companionship of the gods."

5. USHAS.

This goddess, representative of the Dawn, is a favourite object of celebration with the Vedic poets, and "the hymns addressed to her are among the most beautiful—if not the most beautiful—in the entire collection."* She is described as the daughter of the Sky, has Night for her sister, and is related to Varuna. She is at times spoken of as the wife of the Sun; at other times Agni is given as her lover; the Asvins are her friends. Indra is at one time regarded as her creator; at another time he assumes a hostile position, and even crushed her chariot with his thunderbolt.

Ushas is said† to travel in a shining chariot drawn by ruddy horses or cows. Like a beautiful maiden dressed by her mother, a dancing girl covered with jewels, a gaily-attired wife appearing before her husband, or a beautiful girl coming from her bath, she, smiling and confiding in the irresistible power of her attractions, unfolds her bosom to the gaze of the beholders. She dispels the darkness, disclosing the treasures it concealed. She illuminates the world, revealing its most distant extremities. She is the life and health of all things, causing the birds to fly from their nests, and, like a young housewife, awaking all beings

* Muir, O. S. T., v. 181. † Ibid. v. 194.

creatures, sends them forth to the pursuit of their varied occupations. She does good service to the gods, by causing the worshippers to awake, and the sacrificial fires to be lighted. She is asked to arouse only the devout and liberal, while she allows the niggardly to sleep on. She is young, being born every day; and yet she is old, being immortal, wearing out the lives of successive generations, which disappear one after another, whilst she continues undying. The souls of the departed are said to go to her and to the sun.

In the following lines * will be found the main teaching of the Vedas respecting this goddess :—

"Hail, ruddy Ushas, golden goddess, borne
Upon thy shining car, thou comest like
A lovely maiden by her mother decked,
Disclosing coyly all thy hidden grace
To our admiring eyes; or like a wife
Unveiling to her lord, with conscious pride,
Beauties which, as he gazes lovingly,
Seem fresher, fairer each succeeding morn.
Through years and years thou hast lived on, and yet
Thou'rt ever young. Thou art the breath and life
Of all that breathes and lives, awaking day by day
Myriads of prostrate sleepers, as from death,
Causing the birds to flutter in their nests,
And rousing men to ply with busy feet
Their daily duties and appointed tasks,
Toiling for wealth, or pleasure, or renown."

In the following verses by Dr. Muir † we have a still more vivid picture of this goddess as represented in the Vedic hymns ;—

"Hail, Ushas, daughter of the sky,
Who, borne upon thy shining car
By ruddy steeds from realms afar,
And ever lightening drawest nigh ;—

"Thou sweetly smilest, goddess fair,
Disclosing all thy youthful grace,
Thy bosom bright, thy radiant face,
And lustre of thy golden hair ;—

* 'Indian Wisdom,' p. 20. † Muir, O. S. T., v. 196.

"She shines a fond and winning bride,
Who robes her form in brilliant guise,
And to her lord's admiring eyes
Displays her charms with conscious pride ;—

"Or virgin by her mother decked,
Who, glorying in her beauty, shows
In every glance her power she knows
All eyes to fix, all hearts subject ;

"Or actress, who by skill in song
And dance, and graceful gestures light,
And many-coloured vestures bright,
Enchants the eager, gazing throng ;

"Or maid who, wont her limbs to lave
In some cold stream among the woods,
Where never vulgar eye intrudes,
Emerges fairer from the wave ;—

"But closely by the amorous Sun,
Pursued and vanquished in the race,
Thou soon art locked in his embrace,
And with him blendest into one.

"Fair Ushas, though through years untold
Thou hast lived on, yet thou art born
Anew on each succeeding morn,
And so thou art both young and old.

"As in thy fated ceaseless course
Thou risest on us day by day,
Thou wearest all our lives away
With silent, ever-wasting force.

"Their round our generations run :
The old depart, and in their place
Springs even up a younger race,
Whilst thou, immortal, lookest on.

"All those who watched for thee of old
Are gone; and now 'tis we who gaze
On thy approach ; in future days
Shall other men thy beams behold.

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"But 'tis not thoughts so grave and sad
Alone that thou dost with thee bring,
A shadow o'er our hearts to fling;—
Thy beams returning make us glad.

"Thy sister, sad and sombre Night,
With stars that in the blue expanse,
Like sleepless eyes, mysterious glance,
At thy approach is quenched in light;—

"And earthly forms, till now concealed
Behind her veil of dusky hue,
Once more come sharply out to view,
By thine illuming glow revealed.

"Thou art the life of all that lives,
The breath of all that breathes; the sight
Of thee makes every countenance bright,
New strength to every spirit gives.

"When thou dost pierce the murky gloom,
Birds flutter forth from every brake,
All sleepers as from death awake,
And men their myriad tasks resume.

"Some, prosperous, wake in listless mood,
And others every nerve to strain
The goal of power or wealth to gain,
Or what they deem the highest good.

"But some to holier thoughts aspire,
In hymns the race celestial praise,
And light, on human hearths to blaze,
The heaven-born sacrificial fire.

"And not alone do bard and priest
Awake;—the gods thy power confess
By starting into consciousness
When thy first rays suffuse the east;

"And hasting downward from the sky,
They visit men devout and good,
Consume their consecrated food,
And all their longings satisfy.

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"Bright goddess, let thy genial rays
Thus bring store of envied wealth
In kine and steeds, and sons with health,
And joy of heart, and length of days."

In the later writings we find merely the name of Ushas. The people lost much of their poetic fire; hence the more human and practical deities caused the more poetical ones to pass into oblivion. Some of the figures in the preceding extracts are most beautifully drawn. The changing colours of the dawn are compared to the many-coloured robes of the dancing-girl; the golden tipped clouds that appear ere the sun shines in his strength, are like the jewels of a bride decked for her husband; whilst the quiet modesty of the dawn herself is like a shy maiden, conscious indeed of her beauty, entering society under the protection of her mother. And from the last four lines of the metrical sketch it will be noticed, that she was believed to be able to bestow upon her worshippers cattle, horses, sons, health, joy, and length of days.

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CHAPTER VII.

THE STORM DEITIES.

1. INDRA.

As was noticed previously, Indra, together with Agni and Surya, by means of sacrifice obtained supremacy over the other gods; and if we may judge from the number of hymns addressed to him in the Vedas, he was the most popular deity.

He is the god of the firmament, in whose hands are the thunder and the lightning; at whose command the refreshing showers fall to render the earth fruitful. When it is borne in mind that in India for months together the earth is exposed to the scorching rays of the sun, sometimes without a single shower, so that it is impossible for the fields to be ploughed or the seed to be sown, it will not be regarded as wonderful, that the god who is supposed to bestow rain should frequently be appealed to, and that the most laudatory songs should be addressed to him. To the poetic minds of that age, the clouds

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that the winds brought up from the ocean were enemies who held their treasures in their fast embrace until, conquered by Indra, they were forced to pour them upon the parched soil. And very naturally when, in answer to the cry of his worshippers, the genial rains descended, and the earth was thereby changed from a wilderness to a garden, songs of thanksgiving and praise couched in the strongest terms, were addressed to him. The attributes ascribed to him refer principally to his physical superiority; and the blessings sought from him are chiefly of a temporal rather than a spiritual character.

Indra is not regarded as an uncreated deity. In some hymns he is spoken of as the twin-brother of Agni, and therefore the son of Heaven and Earth; whilst in other hymns, heaven and earth are said to have been formed by him. Although his parents are often referred to, it is but seldom that they are named; and when they are named, it is not always that the same parentage is given. He is the king of the gods; and in post-Vedic ages, it is taught that his reign extends for a hundred divine years only; at the end of which time he may be superseded as king by some other of the gods, or even by man, if any be able to perform the severe penance necessary to obtain this exalted position.

In pictures, Indra is represented as a man with four arms and hands; in two he holds a lance, in the third a thunderbolt, whilst the fourth is empty. He is often painted with two arms only, and, having eyes all over his body, is then called Sahasraksha (the thousand-eyed). He is generally depicted as riding upon the wonderful elephant Airavata, who was produced at the churning of the ocean, carrying a thunderbolt in his right hand and a bow in his left. In the Vedic Age his worship was far more popular than it is at present. He is no longer the principal deity, but chief of the inferior gods only.

The position and attributes of Indra as taught by the Vedas will be seen from the following description, abbreviated from that given by Dr. Muir;† —

* See Part II. chap. iv. p. 109.

† Muir, O. S. T., v. 136.

"O one, Indra, come, thou much invoked,
Our potent hymn thy steeds has yoked,
Friend Indra, from the sky descend,
Thy course propitious further bend.
But Indra, though of us thou thinkest,
And our libations gladly drinkest,
We mortal men, can only share
A humble portion of thy care.
We know how many potent ties
Enchain thee in thy paradise.
Thou hast at home a lovely wife,
The charm and solace of thy life.
Thou hast a ceaseless round of joys
Which all thy circling hours employs;
Joys such as gods immortal know,
Ungressed by mortals here below."

Being invoked by mortals, Indra is born. The Sky and the Earth trembled at his appearance, and the Sky exclaimed:—

"Thy father was a stalwart wight;
Of most consummate skill was he,
The god whose genius fashioned thee."

Immediately after his birth the god gave unmistakable evidence of his divinity. Grasping his weapons, he cried,—

"Where, mother, dwell those warriors fierce,
Whose haughty hearts these bolts must pierce?"

Borne in his chariot, hastened by the prayers of his people, the god appears:

Yet not one form alone he bears,
But various shapes of glory wears,
His aspect changing at his will.
Transmuted, yet resplendent still,
In warlike semblance see him stand,
Red lightnings wielding in his hand."

Ready prepared for him is a feast, the principal attraction of which is the Soma juice.[1] Indra was particularly fond of this

[1] See chap. viii.

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intoxicating drink. It is a most strange circumstance that, whilst the Hindus of the present day are prohibited from the use of intoxicants, Indra is described as being addicted to the Soma; whilst the drink itself is deified and worshipped as a god. Indra on his arrival is invited to quaff the invigorating cup:—

"Thou, Indra, oft of old hast quaffed
With keen delight our Soma draught,
All gods the luscious Soma love,
But thou all other gods above.
Thy mother knew how well this juice
Was fitted for her infant's use;
Into a cup she crushed the sap,
Which thou didst sip upon her lap.
Yes, Indra, on thy natal morn,
The very hour that thou wast born,
Thou didst those jovial tastes display,
Which still survive in strength to-day."

Indra, after singing the praises of the Soma juice, drinks the proffered cup, and as a result is most graciously disposed towards the worshippers, ready to give whatever they ask. When thus strengthened by the draught, he goes forth to meet the great enemy he came to conquer. This enemy is Vrittra (Drought). And in the conflict and victory are seen the peculiar blessings to the earth and man that Indra is able to grant. Vrittra is thus described:—

"He whose magic powers
From earth withhold the genial showers;
Of mortal men the foe malign,
And rival of the race divine;
Whose demon hosts from age to age
With Indra war unceasing wage;
Who, times unnumbered crushed and slain,
Is ever newly born again,
And evermore renews the strife
In which again he forfeits life."

The battle is described at length; in which we have a graphic description of the commencement of the rainy season, with the severe thunderstorms which usually accompany this [illegible] of the seasons. At last the conflict is over:

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"And soon the knell of Vritra's doom
Was sounded by the clang and boom
Of Indra's iron shower.
Pierced, cloven, crushed, with horrid yell,
The dying demon headlong fell
Down from his cloud-built tower."

As a result of this victory of the god, the rains descend, and the earth is made fruitful:—

"Now bound by Sushna's spell no more,
The clouds discharge their liquid store;
And long by torrid sunbeams baked
The plains by copious showers are slaked;
The rivers swell, and seawards sweep
Their turbid torrents broad and deep.
The peasant views with deep delight,
And thankful heart, the auspicious sight.
His leafless fields, so sere and sad,
Will soon with waving crops be clad;
And mother Earth, now brown and bare,
A robe of brilliant green will wear."

After this blessing has been received, the sun shines, and earth again is bright; the gods come with their congratulations to their king, and men present their thanksgivings.

Such was Indra in ancient times; and though worshipped still, he occupies a very inferior position in the present age. As mentioned previously, according to the teaching of the later books, his rule over the gods continues for a hundred divine* years; at the expiration of which time he may be superseded by another god, or even by a man. The Purānas teach that, in each age of the world, a different being has enjoyed this position. In the 'Vishnu Purāna'† is the following story of a man raising himself to the throne of Indra.

There was a war between the gods and demons; both parties inquired of Brahmā, which would be victorious. Brahmā replied, "That side for which Rāji (an earthly king) shall take up arms."

* See Part II. chap. x. † Book IV. chap. ix.

The demons first called upon Rāji to invoke his aid. He promised to assist them, provided they would make him their Indra. They replied that they could not promise this, as Prahlāda was Indra already. The same condition was proposed to the gods, to which they consented, and Rāji became their Indra. He then fought for them, and conquered. Upon this, Indra bowed down before him, and, placing Rāji's foot upon his head, said, "Thou hast preserved me from a great danger. I acknowledge thee as my father: thou art king over all; I am thy son." Rāji, however, was contented to remain as king on earth, and appointed Indra to continue as his representative on the throne of heaven. On the death of Rāji, his sons wished to become kings of heaven. This Indra opposed, but was compelled to yield. After a time, being sad because deprived of his share in the sacrifices of mortals, Indra met with his spiritual preceptor Vrihaspati, and asked him for a morsel of the sacrificial butter. The teacher replied that, had Indra applied to him earlier, he would not have been reduced to such straits; but "as it is," he said, "I will regain your sovereignty in a few days." Upon this he commenced a sacrifice, with the special purpose of obtaining power for Indra. The result of this was, that Rāji's sons were led into sin; they became enemies of the Brāhmans, despised the Vedas, and neglected their religious duties. When thus weakened, Indra fell upon and slew them.

The most effectual way by which a mortal could obtain the position of Indra was by the sacrifice of a hundred horses; and as will be seen in the account of Ganga, Indra did not object to play the part of a thief, so as to prevent the completion of the sacrifice by which he was to be deprived of his sovereignty. The most common and generally successful method by which these ambitious mortals were frustrated in their design, was by his sending down some celestial nymphs, called Apsaras, who by their beauty distracted the thoughts of the devotees, and so rendered them unfit to offer this great sacrifice.

In the 'Vishnu Purāna,'* there is a legend of a great conflict

* Book V. chap. xxx.

between Indra and Krishna, in which Indra is overcome. Krishna, accompanied by his wife Satyabhāmā, visits Indra in his heaven. On her arrival there, this lady was most anxious to obtain possession of the Pārijāta tree, which was produced at the churning of the ocean, and planted in Indra's heavenly garden. This tree was beautiful in form, was adorned with lovely and sweet-scented flowers, and bore most luscious fruit. The flowers had this virtue, that, worn in the hair by a wife, they enabled her to retain the love of her husband; whilst those who ate the fruit of this tree could remember what had occurred in their previous states of existence. At the request of his wife, Krishna took the tree, and placed it upon Garuda, his wonderful bird-vehicle. Immediately there was an uproar in heaven; but though Indra and his attendant deities tried to prevent the removal of this tree, they could not do so. Krishna caught the thunderbolt of Indra in his hand, and, returning home unhurt, planted the tree in his garden.

The Rāmayana has a story showing that Indra was believed to have been guilty of the grossest immorality—the seduction of the wife of his spiritual teacher. He is said to have visited the house of Gautama during his absence, in the form of a sage, hoping to be mistaken, by the preceptor's wife, for her husband. But although Ahalyā knew him to be Indra, she yielded to his wishes. As Indra was about to leave the house, Gautama returned, and, knowing what had happened, cursed the god and also his wife. Indra in consequence lost his manhood; and Ahalyā was doomed to live for many years invisible in a forest, until Rāma should meet her there and restore her to her former state. Another account of this curse of Gautama was, that Indra was compelled to carry about with him a thousand disgraceful marks upon his body, that all seeing might know the great sin of which he had been guilty. At Indra's earnest

* One result of this sin of Indra was the fact that a son of Rāvana, who ruled in Ceylon, was able to carry him off as a captive when that king made war upon the gods; and it was not until Brahmā promised immortality to this warrior, that he consented to release Indra. Brahmā gave this prince the name of Indrajita (conqueror of Indra).

request. These were changed from their original form into eyes, which by the ignorant were regarded as an indication of his omniscience.

The heaven of India must not be passed over without notice, as it is there that the good on earth hope to go for a time, as a reward of their holy lives. To go to Swarga, as his heaven is named, is not the highest happiness a man can obtain, because he cannot remain there for ever. When his allotted years of happiness there are over, he must return to earth and live other lives, until he becomes perfect and fit to enjoy the highest felicity—absorption into the Divine Being. The 'Vishnu Purāna'* says: 'Not in hell alone do the souls of the deceased undergo pain: there is no cessation even in heaven; for its temporary inhabitant is ever tormented with the prospect of descending again to earth. Again must he be born upon earth, and again must he die. Whatever is produced that is most acceptable to man becomes a seed whence springs the tree of sorrow.'

The home of Indra is situated on Mount Meru.† It has beautiful houses for its inhabitants to inhabit; and the splendour of its capital is unequalled in the universe. Its gardens are stocked with trees that afford a grateful shade, yield the most luscious fruits, and are adorned with beautiful and fragrant flowers. Most beautiful nymphs (Apsaras) charm the happy inhabitants, whilst choristers and musicians, unrivalled in the universe, discourse sweet music. The city was built by Visva-karma. It is eight hundred miles in circumference, and forty miles high. Its pillars are diamonds; its palaces, thrones, and furniture, pure gold.‡

In Bengal this deity is worshipped one day in each year. He

* Book VI. chap. v.

† Meru is a fabulous mountain, supposed to be the centre of the earth. It is believed to be somewhere to the north of the Himalayas. The heavens of the other gods are situated somewhere in its vicinity. From the fact that they regarded heaven to be near their former home, it would seem that the Indo-Aryans retained pleasant recollections of the place whence they emigrated; or perhaps the inaccessibility of these mountains was a reason for heaven being placed on their summits.

‡ 'Mahabharata,' quoted by Ward, ii. 36.

image is made of mud, prettily painted; on the day after it has been worshipped it is cast into the river. At the commencement of a sacrifice, too, he is invoked, in the hope that he will convey the prayers and offerings to the deity specially worshipped at that time, or that he will conduct the deity into the presence of the worshippers. In seasons of drought special offerings are made to him in some parts of the country, that through his power the clouds may pour their streams upon the parched country.

The more common of Indra's other names are the following:—Sakra, the able one; Divapati, the lord of the gods; Bajri, he who wields the thunderbolt; Vritraha, the destroyer of Vritra; Meghavāhana, he who rides on the clouds; Mahendra; Swargapati, the lord of heaven.

2. INDRĀNI.

Of Indrāni, the wife of Indra (called also Sachi), very little is said. In the Rig-Veda* we read, "Among all females Indrāni is the most fortunate; for her husband shall not at any future time die of old age." This may be explained by the fact that Indrāni is wife to all who may successively attain to the throne of Indra. There is always some one ruling in heaven; the office is perpetual, and as she is the wife of the reigning king, whoever he may be, her husband can never die of old age. Though kings may come and go, she continues queen. She is said to have a son, Chitragupta by name, who was born of a cow; for, owing to a curse pronounced by Umā, none of the goddesses could become a mother. She practised austerities, in order that she might not be childless, and by means of this expedient her desire was gratified. At the birth of this child, the reputed mother suffered all the pains attendant on childbirth, and was able to nurse the child when born.

* Muir, O. S. T., v. 62.

3. PARJANYA.

There are a few hymns addressed to this deity in the Rig-Veda; but from the character and functions ascribed to him, it is difficult to see wherein he differs from Indra. Professor Roth* says, "Taking a review of the whole, we find that Parjanya is a god who presides over the lightning, the thunder, the rain, and the procreation of plants and living creatures. But it is by no means clear whether he is originally a god of the rain, or a god of the thunder." In another essay he says, Parjanya is "the god of the thunderstorms and rain, the generator and nourisher of plants and living creatures. Seeing that the hymns addressed to this deity are so very similar to those sung to Indra, may not Parjanya (whose name signifies one acting for 'another') be merely another name for Indra?" In these hymns are the following passages,† all of which are in perfect harmony with those in honour of Indra:—"Laud Parjanya, worship him with reverence;—the procreative and stimulating fructifier. . . . He splits the trees; he destroys the Rakshasas (cloud demons who withhold the rains?). The whole creation is afraid of his mighty stroke: even the innocent man flees before the vigorous god, when Parjanya *thundering* smites the evil-doers. Like a charioteer urging forward his horses with a whip, the god brings into view his showery scouts. From afar, the lions' roarings arise when Parjanya charges the clouds with rain. The winds blow, the lightnings fall, the plants shoot up, the heaven fructifies; food is produced for all created things when Parjanya, thundering, replenishes the earth with moisture. Raise aloft thy vast water-vessel, and pour down showers; let the discharged rivulets roll on forward, moisten the heaven and earth with fatness; let there be well-filled drinking-places for the cows."

In all this there is not a single idea that was not expressed in

* Muir, O. S. T., v. 142. † Ibid. v. 140.

the hymns to Indra noticed previously. In the Purānas Indra is generally styled the king of the gods; whilst Parjanya is spoken of as the ruler over, and as dwelling in, the clouds.

4. VĀYU.

Another of the storm-gods is Vāyu, the god of the winds. He is often associated with Indra, and is regarded, equally with him, as representing or ruling over the atmosphere. He won the race for the first draught of the Soma juice; and, at Indra's request, allowed him to have a quarter of it. He does not occupy a very prominent position in the Vedic hymns. In one passage* we read, "The two worlds (heaven and earth) generated him for wealth." This may be intended to teach his parentage; and Dr. Muir says that he is not aware of any other passage where his parentage is declared. He is said to be the son-in-law of Tvastri; but here a difficulty occurs: only one daughter of Tvastri (Viśvakarma) is mentioned, and as was noticed in the account of Sūrya, he was said to be husband of this girl.

Vāyu.

Vāyu is described† as being most handsome in form; one who moves noisily in a shining car, drawn by a pair of red or purple horses. At times the number of horses is increased to ninety-one, a hundred, or even a thousand. This latter number would probably be employed during a cyclone. He is seldom mentioned in connexion with Maruts (storm-deities), though in

* Muir, O. S. T., v. 110. † Ibid., v. 115.

one place he is said to have begotten them by the rivers of heaven.

Another name for Vāyu in the Vedas is Vāta. The praise of Vāta is sung in the following hymn:—"(I celebrate) the glory of Vāta's chariot; his noise comes rending and resounding. Touching the sky, he moves onward, making all things ruddy; and he comes propelling the dust of the earth. The gusts of air rush after him, and congregate upon him as women in an assembly. Sitting along with them on the same car, the god [Indra] who is king of this universe is borne along. Hasting forward, . . . he never rests. Friend of the waters, first-born, holy, in what place was he born? His sounds have been heard, but his form is not (seen)."[1]

In a later age, when it was thought necessary to connect the heroes, whose exploits are sung, with the gods, Vāyu, or Pavan as he is then called, is said to have had a son Hanuman, by a monkey mother. Hanuman played a most conspicuous part in Rāma's expedition in search of Sita. In the Mahābhārata, Bhima (the Strong), one of the bravest of the warriors whose history is given there, is also said to be a son of Vāyu. Kunti, the mother of Bhima, had a boon granted as a reward of her devotion, that she could obtain a child by any of the gods she might wish. As her husband, owing to a curse, could not become a father, she employed this charm, and so Vāyu became the father of Bhima.

Vāyu or Pavan (the Purifier) is represented in pictures as a white man riding upon a deer, and carries a white flag in his hand. In the Purānas he is said to be son of Aditi.

Other names by which this deity is known are the following:—Anila, breath; Mārut, air that is necessary to life; Sparsana, he who touches; Gandhavaha, he who carries odours.

[1] Muir, O. S. T., v. 146.

5. THE MARUTS.

In one passage in the Rig-Veda these gods are said to be one hundred and eighty in number; in another text, twenty-seven is the number given; whilst in the Purānas they are said to be forty-nine. In the Vedas they are called the sons of Rudra. They are the companions of Indra; at times they worship him, and thus acknowledge his superiority; at others they seem to assert their inherent power, and remind Indra of the aid they have given him. They are addressed in the following strain:*—"Spears rest upon your shoulders, ye Maruts; ye have anklets on your feet, golden ornaments on your breasts, lustre in your ears, fiery lightnings in your hands, and golden helmets placed on your heads." They are armed with golden weapons and lightnings; dart thunderbolts, gleam like flames of fire, and are borne along with the fury of boisterous winds. They split Vritra (Drought) to pieces, are clothed with rain, create darkness during the day, water the earth, and avert heat. They cause the earth and the mountains to quake. They were accustomed to the use of the soma; and were appealed to, to bring healing remedies, which are described as abiding in the (river) Sindhu, the seas, and the hills.

In the 'Vishnu Purāna' † we find quite a different account of the Maruts. They are said to be the sons of Kasyapa and Diti. Diti having lost her children, propitiated her husband, who promised her a boon. She asked that she might have a son of irresistible prowess and valour, who should destroy Indra. The Muni promised to grant this request on one condition. "You shall bear a son," he said, "who shall slay Indra, if with thoughts wholly pious, and person entirely pure, you carefully carry the babe in your womb for a hundred years." Diti accepted the boon with this condition. Indra hearing of this, tried his best to distract her mind, and so prevent the birth of this wonderful

* Muir, O. S. T., v. 147 ff. † Book I. chap. xxi.

child. When forty-nine years had passed, an opportunity offered itself. Diti retired to rest one night without having washed her feet, and thus violated a rule of ceremonial purity. Indra availed himself of this neglect, and was able to accomplish his purpose. With his thunderbolt he cut the embryo into seven parts. The child thus mutilated cried bitterly; and though Indra tried, he was unable to console it. Being incensed at their obstinacy in crying, he cut each of these seven parts in seven, and thus formed the forty-nine Maruts. Their name was given to them from the words "ma rodih" (weep not), used by Indra when trying to quiet them; and they became subordinate deities—the associates of the wielder of the thunderbolt.

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When Soma was brought to the gods, there was a dispute as to who should have the first draught. It was decided that a race should be run; the winner to have the first taste. Vāyu first reached the goal, Indra being second. Indra tried hard to win, and when near to Vāyu proposed that they should reach the goal together, Vāyu taking two-thirds of the drink. Vāyu said, "Not so! I will be the winner alone." Then Indra said, "Let us come in together, and give me one-fourth of the draught divine!" Vāyu consented to this, and so the juice was shared between them."

Soma is said to have had thirty-three wives, the daughters of Prajāpati: of these Rohini was the favourite. Being dissatisfied with the partiality shown to their sister, the other wives returned to their father. Soma asked that they might return to him; the father consented to restore them, provided Soma would promise to treat them all alike. Soma promised to do this; but, failing to keep his promise, was smitten with consumption for breaking his word.

In the hymns descriptive of, or songs in praise of, Soma, the actual plant and the god supposed to dwell in it and to be manifested in it are not at all distinct. All the gods drink of it; and Soma, the god in the juice, is said to clothe the naked and heal the sick. Many divine attributes are ascribed to him. He is "addressed as a god in the highest strains of adulation and veneration. All powers belong to him; all blessings are besought of him, as his to bestow." He is said to be divine, immortal, and also to confer immortality on gods and men. "In a passage where the joys of paradise are more distinctly anticipated and more fervently implored than in most other parts of the Rig-Veda, Soma is addressed as the god from whom the gift of future felicity is expected. Thus it is there said, 'Place me, O purified god, in that everlasting and imperishable world, where there is eternal light and glory. O Indu (Soma), flow for Indra! Make me immortal in the world where Vaivasvata lives, where is the universal sphere of the sky, where those great waters flow.'†

* Muir, O. S. T., v. 144. † Ibid. v. 266.

In later years the name Soma was, and still is, given to the moon. How and why this change took place is not known; but in the later of the Vedic hymns there is some evidence of the transition. In the following passage Soma seems to be used in both senses:—as god of the intoxicating juice, and as the moon ruling through the night: "By Soma the Adityas are strong; by Soma the earth is great; and Soma is placed in the midst of the stars. When they crush the plant, he who drinks regards it as Soma. Of him whom the priests regard as Soma (the moon) no one drinks."* In another passage this prayer is found: "May the god Soma, he whom they call the Moon, free me." Again, "Soma is the moon, the food of the gods." "The sun has the nature of Agni, the moon of Soma."

In the 'Vishnu Purāna'† we read, "Soma was appointed monarch of the stars and plants, of Brāhmans and plants, of sacrifices and of penance." In this Purāna we have quite a different account of the origin of Soma; but it must be borne in mind, that in this account Soma refers only to the moon. At the time the 'Vishnu Purāna' was written, intoxicating drinks were strictly forbidden; hence Soma, as the god of the juice, was no longer known and praised. According to the Bhāgavata Purāna‡ Soma was the son of Atri, the son of Brahma. He performed the Rājasuya sacrifice, and from the glory then acquired, and the immense dominion with which he had been invested, became so arrogant and licentious, that he carried off Tārā, the wife of Vrihaspati, the preceptor of the gods. In vain Vrihaspati sought to recover his bride; in vain Brahma commanded, and the holy sages remonstrated. In consequence of this there was a great war; the gods with Indra on the one side trying to recover Tārā; Soma with the demons on the other. At length she appealed to Brahma for protection, who thereupon commanded Soma to restore her. On her return, Vrihaspati finding she was pregnant, refused to receive her until after the birth of the child. In obedience to his orders, the child was immediately

* Muir, O. S. T., v. 371. † Book I. chap. xxii.
‡ Book IV. chap. vi.

born; who being wonderful in beauty and power, both Vrihaspati and Soma claimed him as their son. Tara being referred to, was too much ashamed to speak. The child was so indignant at this, that he was about to curse her, saying, "Unless you declare who is my father, I will sentence you to such a fate as shall deter every female from hesitating to speak the truth." On this Brahma again interfered, pacifying the child, and saying to Tara, "Tell me, my child, is this the child of Vrihaspati or Soma?" "Of Soma," she said, blushing. As soon as she had spoken, the lord of the constellations, his countenance being bright, embraced his son and said, "Well done, my boy; verily thou art wise," and hence his name was Budha.*

* This Budha, son of Soma, and regent of the planet Mercury, must not be confounded with Buddha, the teacher whose tenets are held by the Buddhists of the present day. The two beings have nothing in common; and the names are identical only when one or other of them is misspelt or mispronounced.

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CHAPTER IX.

TVASTRI OR VISVAKARMA.

TVASTRI, or as he is called in the later works, Visvakarma, is the architect and workman of the gods—the Hindu Vulcan. The heavenly palaces were formed by him, and the warlike gods are indebted to him for their wonder-working weapons. He sharpens the iron axe of Brâhmanaspati (Agni), and forges the thunderbolts of Indra. He is more intimately associated with men; he forms husband and wife for each other from the womb, and blesses the married couple with offspring. *This accounts* for the fact that the wives of the gods are *his most constant* companions. He made the world and all that is in it; and he is the protector of the creatures he has made. He shares with the other gods in the sacrifices offered by mortals.*

Tvastri is in several passages connected with the RIBHUS. These were sons of a man named Sudhanvan; who, owing to their great skill in working, obtained immortality and divine honours. The Ribhus made Indra's chariot and horses; also by their great austerities restored their parents to youth. They are spoken of as the pupils of Tvastri. It was through their making into four a single sacrificial cup that Tvastri had made that they became divine. This exhibition of skill was made at the command of the gods, and exaltation to deity was the promised reward. Tvastri was very angry at their success; and, ashamed of being seen, hid himself amongst the women. It is said that he even tried to slay his pupils. According to other

* Muir, O. S. T., v. 224.

accounts, he admired their skill and was pleased at its results. Tvastri was the father-in-law of Vivasvat (the Sun).

Indra is occasionally described as being in a state of hostility towards Tvastri and his son Visvarūpa and ultimately caused the death of both. This Visvarūpa had three heads, called respectively, the Soma-drinker, the Wine-drinker, and the Food-eater. He declared in public on one occasion, that the sacrifices should be shared by the gods only; but in private he said the Asuras (demons) should share them too. And as it is customary only to keep promises that are privately made, Indra was afraid that the Asuras, obtaining a share of the sacrifices, would be so strengthened by them as to be able to overthrow his kingdom; he therefore cut off the heads of Visvarūpa with his thunderbolt. The three heads were turned into birds: the Soma-drinker became a Kapiñjala (a Francoline partridge), for Soma was of a brown colour; the Wine-drinker became a Kalavinka (sparrow), because when men are intoxicated they make a noise like a sparrow; the Food-eater became a Tittiri (partridge), which consequently has a great variety of colour, for its body appears to be sprinkled *with ghi* and honey. Tvastri, enraged because Indra had slain his son, made a libation to the gods, but did not invite Indra to partake of it. Indra, noticing this slight, took by force the vessel containing the Soma juice, and drank it. But he took more than was good for him. Tvastri, being angry, broke off the sacrifice, and used the few drops of Soma left to give effect to a curse. He employed the right formula to accomplish the death of Indra, but unfortunately laid stress upon the wrong word. He said, "Thou of whom Indra is the enemy, flourish." As he used the words accented so as to produce this sense, Indra slew him. Had he said, "Flourish, enemy of Indra," he would have slain Indra, instead of being slain by him.*

In the Purāṇas, Tvastri appears under the name of Visvakarma. In the 'Vishnu Purāna' he is styled "the author of a thousand arts, the mechanist of the gods, the fabricator of all ornaments, the chief of artists, the constructor of the self-moving chariots of

* Muir, O. S. T., v. 232.

these deities, by whose skill men obtain subsistence. Though not named as an Aditya in the Vedas, he is generally reckoned as one in the Puranas. In other places he is called a son of Brahma. In pictures he is represented as a white man with three eyes. In his right hand he carries a club. He wears a crown, and is adorned with a necklace and bracelets of gold. He is worshipped once, twice, thrice, or four times each year, according to the devotion of his worshippers. Nowadays, no images of this deity are set up; each man worships the implements of his trade, as the representatives of Viswakarma. The carpenter bows down to his hammer, saw, &c.; the bricklayer to his trowel; the peasant to his plough; the student to his books; the clerk to his pen. When the worship is over, the day is spent in feasting and enjoyment.

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CHAPTER X

YAMA

Yama, the judge of men and king of the unseen world, was the son of Vivasvat (the Sun) and Saranya, the daughter of Tvastri; and was born before Saranya had become afraid of her glorious husband. He was twin-brother of Yami; and in the opinion of Professor Roth, they were regarded as the primeval pair from whom the human family has sprung. In another verse of the Rig-Veda, they are described as the offspring of the heavenly choristers, the Gandharvas. As there were no others to perpetuate the race, Yami entreated Yama to become her husband. She urged the fact that Tvastri had formed them as man and wife in the womb; and therefore it was useless for him to refuse her request, as none can act contrary to the ordinances of Tvastri. But Yama was firm, and resisted her overtures on the ground that it was monstrous for those who are preachers of righteousness to act unrighteously.*

YAMA.

* Muir, O. S. T., v., 169.

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Yama was the first of mortals who died, and, having discovered the way to the other world, is the guide of those who depart this life, and is said to conduct them to a home which is made secure for them for ever. He is a king, and dwells in celestial light in the innermost sanctuary of heaven. He grants bright homes to the pious who dwell with him.*

"In the Rig-Veda, Yama is nowhere represented (as he is in the later mythology) as having anything to do with the punishment of the wicked. Nevertheless he is still to some an object of terror. He is said to have two insatiable dogs, with four eyes and wide nostrils, which guard the road to his abode, and which the departed are advised to hurry past with all possible speed. These dogs are said to wander about among men as messengers, no doubt for the purpose of summoning them to the presence of their master, who in another place is identified with death, and is described as sending a bird as the herald of doom." †

"When the remains of the deceased have been placed upon the funeral pile, and the process of cremation has commenced, Agni, the god of Fire, is prayed not to scorch or consume the departed, not to tear asunder his skin or his limbs, but, after the flames have done their work, to convey to the fathers the mortal who has been presented to him as an offering. Leaving behind on earth all that is evil and imperfect, and proceeding by the paths which the fathers trod, invested with a lustre like that of the gods, it soars to the realms of eternal light in a car, or on wings, and recovers there its ancient body in a complete and glorified form; meets with the forefathers who are living in festivity with Yama; obtains from him, when recognised by him as one of his own, a delectable abode, and enters upon more perfect life, which is crowned with the fulfilment of all desires, is passed in the presence of the gods, and employed in the fulfilment of their pleasure." ‡

In this kingdom, over which Yama reigns, friends meet with their departed friends,—husband with wife, children with parents,—

* Muir, O. S. T., v. 284. † Ibid., v. 302.
‡ Ibid., v. 302 ff.

and together live in a state of blessedness, free from all the [illegible] and infirmities that belong to the present life. And as the gods are described as enjoying all the pleasures that are common to men on earth, there is the clearest evidence that the kingdom of Yama, the abode of the departed, is not at all less sensual than the present world; and when mortals have been privileged to enter this happy land, they become objects of veneration to their descendants still living, and joyfully partake of the oblations they offer to them.

In the following lines Dr. Muir * has given an epitome of the teaching of the Vedas respecting Yama:—

"To great King Yama homage pay,
Who was the first of men that died,
That crossed the mighty gulf and spied
For mortals out the heavenward way.

* * * *

"By it our fathers all have passed:
And that same path we too shall trace,
And every new succeeding race
Of mortal men, while time shall last.

"The god assembles round his throne
A growing throng, the good and wise—
All those whom, scanned with searching eyes,
He recognises as his own.

"Departed mortal, speed from earth
By those old ways thy sires have trod:
Ascend, behold the expectant god
Who calls thee to a higher birth.

* * * *

"And calmly pass without alarm
The four-eyed hounds that guard the road
Which leads to Yama's bright abode;
Their master's friends they dare not harm.

"All imperfections leave behind
Assume thine ancient frame once more,—
Each limb and sense thou hadst before,
From every earthly taint refined.

* Muir, O. S. T., v. 327.

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"And now with heavenly glory bright,
With life intenser, nobler, blest,
With large capacity to taste
A fuller measure of delight,

"Thou there once more each well-known face
Shalt see of those thou lovedst here;
Thy parents, wife, and children dear,
With rapture shalt thou soon embrace.

"The father, too, shalt thou behold,
The heroes who in battle died,
The saints and sages glorified,
The pious, bounteous kings of old.

"The gods whom here in humble wise
Thou worshippedst with doubt and awe,
Shall there the impervious veil withdraw
Which hid their glory from thine eyes.

"The good which thou on earth hast wrought,
Each sacrifice, each pious deed,
Shall there receive its ample meed;
No worthy act shall be forgot.

"In those fair realms of cloudless day,
Where Yama every joy supplies,
And every longing satisfies,
Thy bliss shall never know decay."

In the Puranas Yama is called the judge of men, and is said to rule over the many hells in which the wicked are made to suffer. Thus the "Padma Purana" says: "Yama fulfils the office of judge of the dead, as well as sovereign of the damned: all that die appearing before him, and being confronted with Chitragupta the recorder, by whom their actions have been registered. The virtuous are then conveyed to Swarga (Indra's heaven), whilst the wicked are driven to the different regions of Naraka (hell)."* In the "Vishnu Purana" the names of the different hells are given, and it is there stated that "there are many other fearful hells which are the awful provinces of Yama, terrible with instruments of torture

* "Vishnu Purana," p. 207, note.

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and fire." In the same Purāna* it is said that "all men at the end of their existence (life) become slaves to the power of Yama, by whom they are sentenced to painful punishments." Inquiry is then made as to how men can be free from his authority. The answer is that "Yama is the lord of all men, excepting the worshippers of Madhusudan (Vishnu). Worship him in one of his many forms, and Yama can exert no authority over you."

According to the popular ideas now prevailing, Yama is represented as a green man, clothed in red garments. He has a crown on his head, and a flower in his hair; is armed with a club, and rides upon a buffalo. He is regularly worshipped once a year; and daily a little water is poured out to him. For a whole month each year unmarried girls present offerings to him in the hope that he will provide them with a husband; and that, having granted this boon, he will not recall his gift, and leave them widows. In his presence the good and evil deeds of the departed are weighed: according to the turn of the scale, the soul goes to heaven or hell. The soul is believed to reach Yama's abode in four hours and forty minutes; consequently a dead body cannot be burned until that time has passed after death.

In the 'Bhavishya Purāna' the following legend of Yama's marriage is found. He was exceedingly pleased with a girl named Vijaya, a Brāhman's daughter. When first she saw him she was greatly alarmed, both at his appearance and on his telling her who he was. At length he allayed her fears; and although her brother tried to dissuade her, she consented to become his wife. On her arrival at Yama's abode, he particularly cautioned her against going into the southern quarter of his kingdom. After a time, thinking he must have another wife there, her curiosity overpowered her, and she went into the forbidden region, and was greatly distressed, as she saw the wicked suffering great torment. Amongst other sufferers was her own mother. Meeting Yama there, she tried to obtain her mother's release. Yama declared that this could not be granted unless some one then living on earth would perform a certain

* 'Vishnu Purāna,' p. 276.

...nce, and transfer the merit of the act to the poor woman ...en suffering. After some difficulty, some one was found willing to perform this act of self-sacrifice, and Yama's mother-in-law released.

Stories are told in the Purānas to the effect that the worshippers of Vishnu, if only they have repeated the name of that deity during their lifetime, though it be merely when teaching it to a parrot, or in death merely utter it, when there may be no thought of worship, are free from the power of Yama; that messengers from this deity will rescue them from the power of the king of hell, and convey them to happier worlds.

It is very strange to notice how the character of Yama's rule and kingdom has entirely changed in the conceptions of the Hindus. According to the Vedas, the pure and good went with gladness to Yama's realm of light; now, as taught in the Purānas, it is the wicked who are sent to him for punishment.

In the Mahābhārata[1] is a most interesting story, showing that sometimes Yama is propitious to prayer, and will allow those who have entered his abode to return to earth.

A princess named Savitri loved Satyavān, the son of an old hermit, but was warned by a seer to overcome her attachment, as Satyavān was a doomed man, having only one year to live. Savitri replies:

"Whether his years be few or many, be he gifted with all grace
Or graceless, him my heart hath chosen, and it chooseth not again."

They were married, and the bride strove to forget the prophecy; but as the last day of the year approached, her anxiety became irrepressible. She exhausted herself in prayers and penances, hoping to stay the hand of the destroyer, yet all the while dared not reveal the fatal secret to her husband. At last the dreaded day arrived, and Satyavān set out to cut wood in the forest. His wife asked leave to accompany him, and walked behind her husband, smiling, but with a heavy heart. Satyavān soon made the wood resound with his hatchet, when

[1] 'Indian Wisdom,' p. 395.

THE PURĀNIC DEITIES.

CHAPTER I.

THE PURĀNAS.

THE chief sources of information respecting the popular forms of Hinduism are the two great Epics—the Rāmāyana and the Mahābharata—and the Purānas, or "old traditional stories," eighteen in number. It is believed that the Epics were originally composed not later than B.C. 500; though the Rāmāyana was probably cast into its present form about B.C. 300, and the Mahābharata about B.C. 200. Each of these books is of immense bulk, and the same stories reappear in them again and again. Yet to this day they retain a firm hold of the faith and veneration of the mass of the people of India. Nor is this to be wondered at when we read such words as these, often repeated in these works: "He who reads and repeats this holy life-giving Rāmāyana [or the Mahābharata], is liberated from all sins, and exalted with all his posterity to the highest heaven."

Though it is difficult to determine the date of the Purānas, it is believed that none of them are older than the 8th century A.D. That they are considerably later than the two great Epics is evident from the fact that many who are described in the Epics as men and heroes only, in the Purānas are said to be divine beings. These books differ largely from the Vedas in this respect, that whilst the Vedas treat of the religion common to the Hindus of that period, all of whom worshipped the same deities, each

[illegible] with some one god whose excellences are extolled, whilst others are spoken of in a depreciatory manner. Generally a certain measure of respect is shown to all the gods of the Pantheon; yet the particular deity to whose praise the Purāna is devoted, is said to be supreme; the others being regarded as emanations from or incarnations of this one. Now Brahmā, now Śiva, now Vishnu or some of his many incarnations, is the great god, whose will is that all men should worship him.

The Purānas may be classified as follows:—

I. Those which are devoted to the praise of Brahmā; viz. the Brahmā, the Brāhmanda, the Brahmāvaivarta, the Mārkandeya, the Bhavishya, and the Vaman.

II. Those which relate to Vishnu; viz. the Vishnu, the Bhāgavata, the Naradiya, the Garuda, the Padma, and the Varāha.

III. Those which are chiefly connected with Śiva; viz. the Śiva, the Linga, the Skanda, the Agni, the Matsya, the Kūrma. For the Agni Purāna another called the Vāyu is sometimes substituted.

These Purānas are the authority for nearly the whole of the popular Hinduism of the present day. They are largely read by the people. Parts of some and the whole of others have been translated into the vernaculars from the Sanskrit; and where the people cannot read, it is a common practice for their Guru or Teacher to read to them a few lines, and explain it to them at his periodic visits. By this means the contents of these books are widely known.

The fact that each Purāna is devoted to the praise of some special deity, who, according to its teaching, is supreme, whilst deities described in other Purānas in equally extravagant language are slighted, and in some cases even their worship is forbidden, proves that these books must have been written at different times; and probably by those who were ignorant of what others had written. And yet the popular belief is that they were all the work of the great sage Vyāsa, the arranger of the Vedas and the Mahābhārata.

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universe. He is Brahma who is the greatest of [illegible] can vie with him? In Brahma, the thirty-three gods; in Brahma Indra and Prajāpati; in Brahma all things are contained as in a ship."

Prof. Monier Williams says:* —"Only a few hymns of the Vedas appear to contain the simple conception of one divine self-existent, omnipresent being; and even in these, the idea of one god present in all nature is somewhat nebulous and undefined." Further on he says: "In the Purusha Sūkta of the Rig-Veda, the one spirit is called Purusha. The more common name in the later system is Brahman, neuter (nom. Brahma), derived from the root *brih*, 'to expand,' and denoting the universally expanding essence, or universally diffused substance of the universe. . . Brahman, in the neuter, being 'simple infinite being' —the only real eternal essence—which, when it passes into actual manifested existence, is called Brahmā; when it develops itself in the world, is called Vishnu; and when it again dissolves itself into simple being, is called Śiva; all the other innumerable gods and demi-gods being also mere manifestations of the neuter Brahman, who is eternal."

In the 'Vishnu Purāna' † Brahma is translated as "abstract supreme spirit." Later on ‡ the question is asked, "How can creative agency be attributed to Brahma, who [as abstract spirit] is without qualities, illimitable, and free from imperfection?" The answer is, that "the essential properties of existent things are objects of observation, of which no foreknowledge is attainable; and creation and hundreds of properties belong to Brahma, as inseparable parts of his essence, as heat is inherent in fire." The Purāna goes on to say that creation is effected through the agency of Brahma, the first manifestation of Brahma; and then declares that Vishnu is one with Brahma.

Again, this Purāna § says: "There are two states of this Brahma,—one with, and one without shape; one perishable, one imperishable; which are inherent in all beings. The imperishable

* 'Indian Wisdom,' p. 12.
† Book I. chap. iii.
‡ Page 2.
§ Page 157.

being: the perishable is all the world. The blaze of a burning it one spot diffuses light and heat around: so the world is nothing more than the manifested energy of the supreme Brahma; and inasmuch as the light and heat are stronger or feebler as we are near to the fire or far off from it, so the energy of the supreme is more or less intense in the beings that are less or more remote from him. Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva are the most powerful energies of God: next to them are the inferior deities; then the attendant spirits; then men; then animals, birds, insects, vegetables; each becoming more and more feeble as they are farther from their primitive source."

The 'Vishnu Purāna'* gives the following derivation of the word Brahma:—It "is derived from the root *vriha* (to increase), because it is infinite (spirit), and because it is the cause by which the Vedas (and all things) are developed." Then follows this hymn to Brahma:—"Glory to Brahma, who is addressed by that mystic word (*Om*),† associated eternally with the triple universe (earth, sky, and heaven), and who is one with the four Vedas! Glory to Brahma, who alike in the destruction and renovation of the world is called the great and mysterious cause of the intellectual principle; who is without limit in time or space, and exempt from diminution and decay. . . . He is the invisible, imperishable Brahma; varying in form, invariable in substance; the chief principle, self-engendered; who is said to illuminate the caverns of the heart; who is indivisible, radiant, undecaying, multiform. To that supreme Brahma be for ever adoration."

In perfect harmony with this teaching of the 'Vishnu Purāna' is the common belief of the Hindus. No phrase is more commonly used by them when speaking of the divine being than this:

* Page 273.

† This word occurs at the commencement of prayers and religious ceremonies. It is so sacred that none must hear it pronounced. Originally the three letters *a u m*, of which it is formed, typified the three Vedas; afterwards it became a mystical symbol of the three deities—Brahmā, Vishnu, Siva.

"God (Brahma) is one without a second." The word used by them for God as distinguished from his manifestations is Brahma; and when charged with Polytheism, and of violating the primary law respecting the unity of God, they reply that Brahmā, Vishnu, Siva, &c., are only manifestations of the supreme Brahma.*

* The Theistic sect that arose in Bengal during the present century, for a long time gloried in the name Brahmo Somaj; *i.e.* the Society that worshipped the supreme Brahma or God.

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CHAPTER III.

BRAHMA AND SARASVATI.

BRAHMÂ

BRAHMÂ, the first of three great Hindu gods, is called the Creator; he is the father of gods and men, Prajâpati, the lord of creatures. As nearly all the sacred writers seem to regard it as a duty to describe the work of creation as performed by this god, and as each account differs in detail from the others, it is a perfectly hopeless task to attempt to give a harmonised statement gathered from them all. I shall therefore give Manu's * account of it, which is largely founded upon the teaching of the Vedas, though considerably mixed up with more modern views.

BRAHMA.

"This universe was enveloped in darkness—unperceived, undistinguishable, undiscoverable, unknowable, as it were, entirely sunk in sleep. The irresistible self-existent lord, undiscerned, creating this universe with the five elements, and all other things, was manifested dispelling the gloom. He who is beyond the cognizance of the senses, subtile,

* 'Dharma Shastra,' chaps. i.–v., written about 800 B.C.

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undiscernible, eternal, who is the essence of all things, and inconceivable, himself shone forth. He, desiring, seeking to produce various creatures from his own body, first created the waters, and deposited in them a seed. This (seed) became a golden egg, resplendent as the sun, in which he himself was born as Brahmā, the progenitor of all worlds. The waters are called *nārāḥ*, because they are the offspring of Nara; and since they were formerly the place of his movement (*ayana*), he is therefore called Nārāyana.* Being formed by that First Cause, undiscernible, eternal, which is both existent and non-existent, that male is known in the world as Brahmā. That lord having continued a year in the egg, divided it into two parts by his mere thought."† In the Mahābhārata, and some of the Purānas, Brahmā is said to have issued from a lotus that sprung from the navel of Vishnu.

The egg referred to above is thus described in the 'Vishnu Purāna:'‡—"Its womb, vast as the mountain Meru, was composed of the mountains, and the mighty oceans were the waters which filled its cavity. In that egg were the continents, seas, and mountains; the planets and divisions of the universe; the gods, the demons and mankind. Brahmā is said to be born; a familiar phrase to signify his manifestation." This wonderful egg, after the Creator had inhabited it for a thousand years, burst open, and Brahmā by meditation commenced the work of creation. Seeing that the earth was sunk beneath the waters, he assumed the form of a boar,§ and, diving, raised it upon his tusks. After this, Brahmā continued the work of creation.

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* According to the 'Brahmā Purāna,' another name, Āpava (who sports on the waters), is given Brahma, which has a similar, though not an identical application with Nārāyana. Āpava, according to that Purāna, divided himself into two parts, male and female, from whom proceeded Vishnu, who in his turn created Virāj, who brought the first man into the world. Wilson says, "According to the commentator on this passage, the first stage was the creation of Āpava, or Vishistha, or Virāj, by Vishnu, through the agency of Brahmā; and the next was the creation of Manu by Virāj." *Dictionary, s. v. Āpava.* † Muir, O. S. T., iv. 31. ‡ Page 18.

§ In later writings Vishnu, in a special incarnation, is said to have accomplished this work.

In pictures Brahmā is represented as a red man with four heads, though in the Purānas he is said to have had originally five. He is dressed in white raiment, and rides upon a goose. In one hand he carries a staff, in the other a dish for receiving alms. A legend in the 'Matsya Purāna'* gives the following account of the formation of his numerous heads:—"Brahmā next formed from his own immaculate substance a female who is celebrated under the names of Satarupā, Savitri, Sarasvati, Gāyatri, and Brāhmani. Beholding his daughter, born from his body, Brahmā became wounded with the arrows of love, and exclaimed, 'How surpassingly lovely she is!' Satarupā turned to the right side from his gaze; but as Brahmā wished to look after her, a second head issued from his body. As she passed to the left, and behind him, to avoid his amorous glances, two other heads successively appeared. At length she sprang into the sky; and as Brahmā was anxious to gaze after her there, a fifth head was immediately formed. Brahmā then said to his daughter, 'Let us produce all kinds of animated beings, men, Suras (gods), and Asuras (demons). Hearing this, she descended, and Brahmā having espoused her, they withdrew to a secluded spot where they dwelt together for one hundred divine years;† at the expiration of which time was born Manu, who is also called Swayambhuva and Viraj."‡

The following legend§ occurs, with some variations, in several Purānas, showing why Brahmā was deprived of his fifth head:—

"Once when they were assembled on the top of Meru, the holy sages having saluted Brahmā, requested him to declare the true nature of the godhead; but the Creator, influenced by the

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* Kennedy's 'Hindu Mythology,' p. 317.

† See Part II. chap. x.

‡ The 'Bhāgavata Purāna' says there was another son from this marriage, named Priyavrata. Being dissatisfied with the work of the Sun because he illuminated only one-half of the world at a time, he followed him seven times round daily. Brahmā stopped him, like another sun, and thus turned night into day. Brahmā stopped him, like another sun, and thus turned night [illegible] the seven oceans; and thus the ruts made by his chariot wheels became the seven continents were made.—*Dowson.*

§ Kennedy's 'Hindu Mythology,' p. 273.

delusion of Mahesha (a demon), and his mind obscured by spiritual darkness, asserted his own pre-eminence, and said: 'I am the womb of the universe, without beginning or end, and the sole and self-existent lord; and he who does not worship me, shall never obtain beatitude.' On hearing this, Kratu, a form of Nārāyana (Vishnu), smiled and said: 'Hadst thou not been misled by ignorance, thou wouldst not have made an assertion so contrary to truth; for I am the framer of the universe, the source of life, the unborn, eternal and supreme Nārāyana; and, had I not willed it, creation would not have taken place.'

Thus Vishnu and Brahmā disputed, and at length they agreed to allow the matter to be decided by the Vedas. The Vedas declared that Siva was creator, preserver, destroyer. Having heard these words, Vishnu and Brahmā, still bewildered by the darkness of delusion, said, 'How can the lord of goblins, the delighter in graveyards, the naked devotee covered with ashes, haggard in appearance, wearing twisted locks ornamented with snakes, be the supreme being?' The incorporeal Prāna (Life), then assuming a form, said, 'This is not the real form of Siva; but when united to his energy, he sometimes, under the figure of Rudra, delights himself in various illusive sports.' But even these words dispelled not the spiritual darkness of Vishnu and Brahmā; when suddenly appeared between them a wondrous effulgence filling the heavens, earth, and mid-air. In the midst of this they beheld a human form, vast, uncreated, of a dark hue, holding in his hand a trident and a rosary, and wearing a serpent for a Brahmanical thread. On seeing whom, the fifth head of Brahmā glowed with anger and said: 'I know thee well, O Chandra Shekera, for from my forehead didst thou spring, and because thou didst weep I called thee Rudra. Hasten then to seek the refuge of my feet, and I will protect thee, O my son!' At these proud words of Brahmā, Siva was incensed; and from his anger sprang into existence a terrific form (Bhairava), whom he thus addressed: 'Chastise this lotus-born!' No sooner did Bhairava receive this order, than instantly he cut off the head of Brahmā with the thumb of his left hand. That member which had committed the fault received punishment, and therefore

Brahmā was deprived of his fifth head." Upon this Vishnu and Brahmā praised Siva.

In another part of the same Purāna* is another legend, giving a somewhat different account of this circumstance:—

"Formerly all things movable and immovable having been destroyed, nought remained but one boundless ocean; nor fire, nor air, nor sun, nor atmosphere, nor stars, nor planets, nor light, nor earth, nor heaven, nor gods nor demons existed then; and all was involved in impenetrable darkness. One being alone, Mahā Kāla (Siva), pervaded all space; who being desirous of creation, churned his left arm with his right forefinger; when issued a bubble, which increasing in size became an egg resembling gold. This egg Mahā Kāla divided with his hand; of the upper part he formed the heavens, and of the lower half the earth, and in the centre of it appeared Brahmā with five heads and four arms, to whom Mahā Kāla thus said, 'Through my favour effect creation:' having thus spoken, he disappeared.

"Brahmā having then considered in what manner he could accomplish this object, propitiated this lord Bhava with a severe *tapas* (meditation), and in consequence received *from him* the four Vedas, and was thus enabled to become the Creator. But as Siva had not revealed himself, Brahmā continued his *tapas*, in order that he might behold that god. Siva was propitiated; but, still invisible, thus said, 'O Brahmā, choose whatever boon thou choosest!' Brahmā craved that Siva would become his son. Siva replied: 'Propitiated by thy piety, I will become thy son under the form of Rudra; but as thou hast craved a boon which ought not to have been asked, I shall on this account hereafter cut off one of thy heads. Nevertheless, though thou shalt afterwards possess but four heads, yet as thou hast been formed by me, from my own substance which is that Brahma, shalt thou in remembrance of this circumstance be denominated Brahmā. Also from my becoming thy son, shalt thou be called Pitāmāha (the great father).

"Brahmā having obtained both a boon and a curse, proceeded,

* Kennedy's 'Hindu Mythology,' p. 276.

in order to effect creation, to sacrifice to that fire which had sprung from his own effulgence, and from the heat, perspiration collected on his forehead. To wipe this off with a small piece of wood, a drop of blood fell into the fire, from which by the will of Siva sprang Rudra, of a dark hue, with five heads, ten hands, and fifteen eyes; having a serpent for his Brāhmanical thread, wearing twisted locks, and the moon on his head, and clothed in the skin of a lion. Having seen such a son, Brahmā was delighted, and bestowed on him various appellations. Brahmā having created various classes of beings, they all adored him, except Rudra; to whom Brahmā said, 'Why dost thou not also adore me?' Rudra replied, 'I worship none other than that effulgence from which I sprang.' Having thus spoken, he departed to Siva's abode. But Brahmā from the impurity of his nature became immersed in spiritual darkness, and thought that it was by his own power alone that he had effected creation, and there was no other god equal to him. His fifth head also having heard the Vedas, which the other four heads had delivered, acquired a splendour which neither Suras (gods) nor Asuras (demons) could endure."

The 'Padma Purāna'* thus concludes this story: "Unable therefore to approach or behold it they determined to apply to Siva for relief. Being propitiated by them, Siva granted their request, and proceeded with them where Brahmā remained inflated with pride. On seeing Siva, Brahmā did not pay him the customary honours. Siva, seeing Brahmā's fifth head inflicting distress on the universe by its effulgent beams, brighter than a thousand suns, approached him and said, 'Oh! this head shines with too much splendour,' and immediately cut it off with the nail of his left thumb, with as much ease as a man cuts off the stem of a plantain tree."

The Mahābhārata says that Siva did not actually cut off Brahmā's head on this occasion, but was only prevented from doing this through the intercession of the gods. It was because of his attempting to seduce his own daughter that Siva decapi-

* Kennedy's 'Hindu Mythology,' p. 270.

tated him. This crime was tempted when in a fit of intoxication; hence Brahmā pronoced a curse upon the gods who should hereafter drink spirits.

In the passages just qted, Brahmā is represented as worshipping Siva for his ov special benefit; in the 'Vishnu Purāna,' he is described joining with gods and men in the worship of this same deity, at as officiating as priest on that occasion. And in another p of the Purāna † is the following hymn addressed to Vishnu b Brahmā:—"Thou art the common centre of all, the protector of the world, and all things exist in thee. All that has been, or ll be, thou art. There is nothing else but thee, O lord; nothi else has been, or will be. Thou art independent, and without beginning." The object of this laudation was to induce Vish to save the earth from its load of sorrow; in answer to it, Vishnu appeared on earth as Krishna.

At the present time Brahmis not largely worshipped by the Hindus. "The Brāhmans in their morning and evening worship repeat an incantation containg a description of the image of Brahmā; at noon they prese to him a single flower; at the time of burnt-offering, *ghī* is sented to him. In the month of Māgh, at the full moon, an ephen image of him is worshipped, with that of Siva on his righ hand, and Vishnu on his left." ‡ Brahmā as Creator is suppos to have finished his work; hence excepting in one place, viz. Pushkara in Ajmīr, there is no temple to this god now existin. It is evident that for centuries the worship of Brahmā has no been common, from the fact that in the 'Skānda Purāna' § is a indelicate legend, in which the charge of falsehood is prov against him, and is given to account for the fact that his worship had ceased. It concludes as follows:—"Since thou has childishly and with weak understanding asserted a falsehoo let no one henceforth perform worship to thee."

The Mahābharata says that Brahmā's heaven is eight hundred miles long, four hundred wide and forty high. Nārada declared

* Page 102.
† Page 196.
‡ Ward, ii. 39.
§ Kennedy's 'Hindu Mythology,' p. 271.

himself incompetent to describe it. In two hundred years he could not mention all its excellences. He said that it contained *in a superior degree* all the excellences of the other heavens, and that whatever existed in the creation of Brahmā on earth, from the smallest insect to the largest animal, was to be found there.*

In the later mythology, a deity named Dhātā (the Creator), who in the Rig-Veda has no very clearly-defined powers, but is there said to operate in the production of life and the preservation of health, is identified with Prajāpati, or Brahmā; and in the sense of "maker," the term is also applied to Vishnu and Krishna. Sometimes he is said to be a son of Brahmā.

In addition to the names of Brahmā already referred to, the following are those most commonly known:—

Atmabhu, "The self-existent."

Parameshti, "The chief sacrificer." He as the first Brāhman performed all the great sacrifices of the Hindu religion.

Lokesha, "The god of the world."

Hiranyagarbha, "He who came from the golden egg."

Savitripati, "The husband of Savitri."

Adikavi, "The first poet."

SARASVATI.

Brahmā's wife is Sarasvati, the goddess of wisdom and science, the mother of the Vedas, and the inventor of the Devanāgari letters. She is represented as a fair young woman, with four arms. With one of her right hands she is presenting a flower to her husband, by whose side she continually stands; and in the other she holds a book of palm-leaves, indicating that she is fond of learning. In one of her left hands she has a string of pearls, called Sivamāla (Siva's garland), which serves as a rosary; and in the other is a *damaru*, or small drum. She dwells on earth amongst men, but her special abode is with her husband in Brahmāloka.

* Dowson, *s. v.*

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Sarasvati having been produced from Brahmā was regarded as his daughter; hence her union with him was said to be criminal by the other gods. Sometimes she is called the wife of Vishnu, but this difficulty is explained by a legend.* "Sarasvati, by the standard mythological authorities, is the wife of Brahmā. The Vaishnavas of Bengal have a popular legend that she was the wife of Vishnu, as were also Lakshmi and Gangā. The ladies disagreed, Sarasvati, like the other type of learned ladies, Minerva,- being something of a termagant; and Vishnu, finding that one wife was as much as even a god could manage, transferred Sarasvati to Brahmā and Gangā to Siva, and contented himself with Lakshmi alone.

SARASVATI.

"Sarasvati is a goddess of some though not of very great importance in the Vedas. . . . She is celebrated both as a river and a goddess. She was primarily a river deity, as her name, 'the watery,' clearly denotes; and in this capacity she is celebrated in a few separate passages. Allusion is made in the hymns, as well as in the Brāhmanas, to sacrifices being performed on the banks of this river, and of the adjoining Drishadvati; and the Sarasvati in particular seems to have been associated with the reputation for sanctity which . . . was ascribed to the whole region called Brahmāvartta, lying between these two small streams, and situated immediately to the westward of the Jumnā. The Sarasvati thus appears to have been to the early Indians what the Ganges (which is only twice named in the Rig-Veda) is to their descendants. . . . When once the river had acquired a divine

* Wilson's Works, ii, 187.

character, it was quite natural that she should be regarded as the patroness of ceremonies which were celebrated on the margin of her holy waters, and that her direction and blessing should be invoked as essential to their proper performance and success. The connexion into which she was thus brought with sacred rites may have led to the further step of imagining her to have an influence on the composition of the hymns which formed so important a part of the proceedings, and of identifying her with Vāch, the goddess of speech. At least I have no other explanation to offer to this double character and identification.

"Sarasvati is frequently invited to the sacrifices along with several other goddesses, who, however, were never, like her, river nymphs, but personifications of some department of religious worship, or sacred science. She is frequently invoked along with other deities.

"In many passages where she is celebrated, her original character is, as I have intimated, distinctly preserved. Thus in two places she is mentioned along with rivers, or fertilizing waters: 'Ye opulent waters, command riches; ye possess excellent power and immortality; ye are mistresses of wealth and progeny; may Sarasvati bestow this vitality on her worshipper.' And she is mentioned with the other well-known streams which are there named, the Sindhu, Gangā, &c. In another place she is said to 'surpass all other rivers, and to flow pure from the mountains to the sea.' In other places she is called upon to 'descend from the sky, from the great mountain to the sacrifice;' and is supplicated to combine with the spouses of the other gods, to afford secure protection to the worshippers. . . . It is difficult to say whether in any of the passages in which Sarasvati is invoked, even in those where she appears as the patroness of holy rites, her character as a river goddess is entirely left out of sight. . . .

"In the later mythology, as is well known, Sarasvati was identified with Vāch, and became under various names the spouse of Brahmā, and the goddess of wisdom and eloquence, and is invoked as a Muse. In the Mahābhārata she is called the

* Muir, O. S. T., v. 339.

mother of the Vedas, and the same is said of Vach in the Tait. Brah. where she is said to be the wife of Indra, to contain within herself all worlds, and to have been sought after by the Rishis who composed the Vedic hymns, as well as by the gods through austerity."*

In the Purānas, Sarasvati is spoken of under other titles. A verse in the 'Matsya Purāna' gives authority for the belief that one goddess only is intended, though she is called by several names: "Brahmā next formed from his own immaculate substance a female, who is celebrated under the names of Satarupā, Savitri, Sarasvati, Gāyatri, and Brāhmani." In the following legend from the 'Skanda Purāna,'† though by Savitri Sarasvati is intended, Gāyatri represents some other person who became a *second* wife of Brahmā. Iswara (Siva) is addressing Devi (Parvati):—

"Listen, O Devi, and I will tell you how Savitri forsook Brahmā, and he in consequence espoused Gāyatri. The Vedas have declared the great advantages which are derived from sacrifice, by which the gods are delighted, and therefore bestow rain upon the earth. . . . To secure therefore the verdure and vitality of the three worlds, I perform sacrifices; and, in imitation of me, sacrifices are performed by gods and men. For the same purpose Brahmā and his wife Savitri, the immortals, and the holy sages repaired to Pushkara; but when all the preparations had been made, with all due rites and ceremonies, for performing the sacrifices, Savitri, detained by some household affairs, was not in attendance. A priest accordingly went to call her; but she replied, 'I have not yet completed my dress nor arranged several affairs. Lakshmi, and Bhavāni, and Ganga, and Svāha, and Indrāni, and the wives of the other gods and of the holy sages, have not yet arrived, and how therefore can I enter the assembly alone?'

"The priest returned, and thus addressed Brahmā: 'Savitri is engaged and will not come; but without a wife what advantage can be derived from these rites?' The god, incensed at

* Muir, O. S. T. v. 337 ff. † Kennedy, 'Hindu Mythology,' p. 320.

the conduct of Sāvitri, thus spoke to Indra: 'Hasten, and, obedience to my order, bring a wife from wherever you can find one!' Indra proceeded accordingly; and as he passed hastily along, he saw a milkmaid, young, beautiful, and of a smiling countenance, carrying a jar of butter. He seized her and brought her to the assembly; when Brahmā thus spoke: 'O gods and holy sages, if it seem good unto you I will espouse this Gāyatri, and she shall become the mother of the Vedas, and the cause of purity to these worlds!' Upon this Brahmā was united to Gāyatri, who was led into the bower of the bride, and there arrayed in silken garments, and adorned with the costliest ornaments.

"At this time Savitri, accompanied by the wives of Vishnu, Rudra, and the other gods, came to the place of sacrifice. Seeing the milkmaid in the bride's bower, and the priests engaged in the performance of the sacred rites, incensed with anger, she thus addressed Pitāmaha: 'O Brahmā! hast thou conceived so sinful an intention as to reject me, who am thy wedded wife? Hast thou no sense of shame, that thus, influenced by love, thou committest so reprehensible an act? Thou art called the great father of gods and holy sages, and yet thou here publicly actest in a manner which must excite the derision of the three worlds. But how can I now show my face; or, deserted by my husband, call myself a wife?' Brahmā replied: 'The priests informed me that the time for the sacrifice was passing away, and that it could not profitably be performed unless my wife were present, . . . and Indra having brought that Gāyatri, Vishnu and Rudra gave her in marriage to me. Forgive, therefore, this one act, and I will never again offend thee!'

"On hearing these words, Savitri exclaimed, 'By the powers which I have obtained by the performance of *tapas*, may Brahmā never be worshipped in temple or sacred place, except one day in each year. . . . And, Indra, since thou didst bring that milkmaid to Brahmā, thou shalt be bound in chains by thine enemies, and confined in a strange country; and thy city and station shall be occupied by thine enemies.' Addressing Vishnu, she said, 'Since thou gavest her in marriage to Brahmā, shalt thou, in

consequence of Bhṛigu's curse, be born amongst men, and shalt endure the agony of having thy wife ravished from thee by thine enemy; and long also shalt thou wander, the humble keeper of cattle!' To Rudra she said: 'By the curse of the holy sages, shalt thou be deprived of thy manhood!' To Agni: 'Mayest thou be a devourer of all things, clean and unclean!' To the priests and Brāhmans: 'Henceforth shall ye perform sacrifices solely from the desire of obtaining the usual gifts; and from covetousness alone, shall ye attend temples and holy places; satisfied only shall ye be with the food of others, and dissatisfied with that of your own houses; and in quest of riches shall ye unduly perform holy rites and ceremonies!'

"Having pronounced these curses, Sāvitri left the assembly, and was accompanied for a short distance by Lakshmi and the other goddesses, when they all declared their intention of returning. On hearing this, Savitri was incensed, and thus addressed them: 'Since you now forsake me, O Lakshmi! mayest thou never remain stationary in one place;* and mayest thou always abide with the vile, the inconstant, the contemptible, the sinful, the cruel, the foolish, and the barbarian! And, Indrāni, when Indra incurs the guilt of Brāhmanicide by slaying Tvastri's son, then shall Nahusha acquire his kingdom, and, desirous of obtaining thee, shall exclaim, "Am I not Indra? why then does not the young and lovely Indrāni wait upon me? If I do not obtain her, I will slay all the gods." Thou on learning his wishes shalt remain in thy house immersed in grief, and borne down by the weight of my curse!' Sāvitri then pronounced this curse on the wives of the gods collectively: 'May you all remain barren; and may you never enjoy the pleasure of having children!' Vishnu then tried in vain to appease her."

After Savitri's angry departure from the assembly, Gāyatri modified the curses that had been pronounced. She promised all kinds of blessing, including final absorption into him, to all the worshippers of Brahmā. Though Indra be bound, his son should release him. Though Vishnu lost his wife, he should

* Lakshmi is the goddess of fortune.

regain his. Though Rudra be deposed of his manhood, the linga as his representative should be universally worshipped. Though men made gifts to the Brāhmans, it would be because they reverenced them as gods. And though the goddesses could not have children of their own, this fact would not cause them regret.

The 'Padma Purāna' gives a happier termination to this story. Vishnu and Lakshmi, at Brahmā's request, followed Savitri when she left the assembly, and induced her to return. On re-entering, Brahmā asked what she wished him to do with Gāyatri. Savitri was too bashful to speak; whereupon Gāyatri threw herself at her feet. Savitri raised her, and embracing her said: "A wife ought to obey the wishes and orders of her husband; for that wife who reproaches her husband, who is complaining and quarrelsome, and instead of being his life, deprives him by her conduct of length of years, shall, when she dies, most assuredly go to hell. Considering this, the virtuous wife will do nothing displeasing to her husband; therefore let us both be attached to Brahmā." "So be it," said Gāyatri; "thy orders will I always obey, and esteem thy friendship precious as my life. Thy daughter am I, O goddess! Deign to protect me!"

In a legend in the 'Varaha Purāna,' Sarasvati is addressed as Gāyatri, Sarasvati, Maheshvari (one of the names of Parvati), and also Savitri. Her most common name is Sarasvati, by which name as the goddess of learning, she is regularly worshipped once a year.

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CHAPTER IV.

VISHNU AND LAKSHMI.

VISHNU

VISHNU is called the second person of the Hindu Trimurti, or Triad: but though called *second*, it must not be supposed that he is regarded as in any way inferior to Brahmā; in some books Brahmā is said to be the first cause of all things, in others it is as strongly asserted that Vishnu has this honour; while in others it is claimed for Siva. As Brahmā's special work is creation, that of Vishnu is preservation. In the following passage from the 'Padma Purāna,' it is taught that Vishnu is the supreme cause, and also that his special work is *to preserve*:—"In the beginning of creation, the great Vishnu, desirous of creating the whole world, became threefold; Creator, Preserver, Destroyer. In order to create this world, the Supreme Spirit produced from the right side of his body himself as Brahmā; then, in order to preserve the world, he produced from his left side Vishnu; and in order to destroy the world, he produced from the middle of his body the eternal Siva. Some worship Brahmā, others Vishnu, others Siva; but Vishnu, one yet threefold, creates, preserves, and destroys; therefore let the pious make no difference between the three."

The essence of the teaching of the 'Vishnu Purāna' is given in a few lines.* "Listen to the complete compendium of the Purāna according to its tenor. The world was produced from Vishnu; it exists in him; he is the cause of its continuance and cessation; he is the world." Immediately afterwards is a hymn

* 'Vishnu Purana,' p. 607.

to him which commences as follows :—"Glory to the unchangeable, holy, eternal, supreme Vishnu, of one universal nature, the mighty over all; to him who is Hiranyagarbha (Brahmā), Hari

VISHNU.

(Vishnu), and Sankara (Siva); the Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer of the world." As will be noticed later on, Siva is commonly called Mahādeva (the great god); yet by his worshippers Vishnu is generally called Nārāyana, when they think of him apart from his incarnations, though originally this was a name of Brahmā; and very frequently Vishnu is indicated by the word Ishwar (God), as though he were *the* God.

The word Vishnu in the Purānas is generally said to be de-

rived from the root viś (to enter); entering in or pervading the universe, agreeably to the text of the Vedas: 'Having created that (world), he then afterwards enters into it.' According to the 'Matsya Purāna,' the name alludes to his entering into the mundane egg; according to the 'Padma Purāna,' to his entering into or combining with Prakriti, as Purush or spirit."*

In the 'Bhāgavata Purāna'† is the following legend to show the superiority of Vishnu:—"Once when the holy sages were performing a sacrifice on the banks of the Sarasvati, a dispute arose amongst them as to which of the three gods was greatest. They sent Bhrigu, the son of Brahmā, to ascertain this point. He first went to the heaven of Brahmā, and, desirous of discovering the truth, entered his court without paying him the usual honours. Incensed at this disrespect, Brahmā glowed with anger; but recollecting that it was caused by his own son, he assuaged the fire of wrath which had risen in his mind. Bhrigu then proceeded to Kailasa; and when Maheshwara (Siva) gladly hastened to embrace him as a brother, he turned away from the proffered embrace. Enraged at such misconduct, the god, seizing his trident, prepared to kill the divine sage; but Parvati fell at his feet, and by her words appeased the anger of her lord. Bhrigu next went to Vishnu's heaven, and kicked the god's breast, as he lay slumbering in the lap of Lakshmi. The lord, rising from his couch, and bowing respectfully to Bhrigu, thus addressed him: 'Welcome to thee, O Brāhman! Be seated for a little, and deign to excuse the fault which, through ignorance, I have committed [in not performing duties due to a guest], and the hurt which your tender feet must have received!' Having thus spoken, he rubbed the feet of Bhrigu with his own hands, and added: 'To-day am I a highly honoured vessel, since thou, O lord! hast imprinted on my breast the dust of thy sin-dispelling feet.' When Vishnu had finished speaking, Bhrigu was so affected by these benevolent words, that he was unable to reply, and departed in silence, whilst tears of devout emotion

* Vishnu Purāna,' p. 3, note.
† Kennedy, 'Hindu Mythology,' p. 240.

rushed from his eyes. On his narrating his adventures to the saints on the banks of the Sarasvati, their doubts were immediately dispelled; they believed Vishnu to be the greatest of the three gods, because he was exempt from impatience and passion."

In the 'Padma Purāna'* Siva is represented as admitting Vishnu's superiority to himself. Addressing his wife, he says: "I will acquaint thee with the real essence and form of Vishnu. Know then that he is in truth Nārāyana, the Supreme Spirit, and Parabrahma (the great Brahma), without beginning or end, omniscient, and omnipresent; eternal, unchangeable, and supremely happy. He is Siva, Hiranyagarbha, and Surya; he is more excellent than all the gods, even than I myself. But it is impossible for me, or Brahmā, or the gods to declare the greatness of Vāsudeva, the originator and lord of the universe."

In the 'Varahar Purāna'† the special work of Vishnu as preserver is described:—"The supreme god Nārāyana having conceived the thought of creating this universe, considered also that it was necessary that it should be protected after it was created; 'but as it is impossible for an incorporeal being to exert action, let me produce from my own essence a corporeal being, by means of whom I may protect the world.' Having thus reflected, the pre-existing Nārāyana created from his own substance an ungenerated and divine form, on whom he bestowed these blessings:—'Be thou the framer of all things, O Vishnu! Be thou always the protector of the three worlds, and the adored of all men. Be thou omniscient and almighty; and do thou at all times accomplish the wishes of Brahmā and the gods.' The Supreme Spirit then resumed his essential nature. Vishnu, as he meditated on the purpose for which he had been produced, sank into a mysterious slumber; and as in his sleep he imagined the production of various things, a lotus sprang from his navel. In the centre of this lotus Brahmā appeared; and Vishnu beholding the production of his body was delighted."

* Kennedy, 'Hindu Mythology,' p. 246. † Ibid.

In pictures Vishnu is represented as a black man with four arms: in one hand he holds a club; in another a shell; in a third a chakra, or discus, with which he slew his enemies; and in the fourth a lotus. He rides upon the bird Garuda, and is dressed in yellow robes.

The following description of Vaikuntha, the heaven of Vishnu, is from the Mahābhārata.* It is made entirely of gold, and is 80,000 miles in circumference. All its buildings are made of jewels. The pillars and ornaments of the buildings are of precious stones. The crystal waters of the Ganges fall from the higher heavens on the head of Druva; from thence into the hair of the seven Rishis; and from thence they fall and form a river. Here are also five pools containing blue, red, and white lotuses. On a seat glorious as the meridian sun, sitting on white lotuses, is Vishnu; and on his right hand Lakshmi, who shines like a continued blaze of lightning, and from whose body the fragrance of the lotus extends 800 miles.

This deity is worshipped not only under the name and in the form of Vishnu, but also in one of his many incarnations. Whenever any great calamity occurred in the world, or the wickedness of any of its inhabitants proved an unbearable nuisance to the gods, Vishnu, as Preserver, had to lay aside his invisibility, come to earth in some form, and, when his work was done, returned again to the skies. There is no certainty as to the number of times he has become incarnate. Some Purānas describe ten Avatāras; some mention twenty-four; and sometimes they say they are innumerable. Ten is the commonly received number, and these certainly are the most important ones. They will be considered in order. Of these ten, nine have already been accomplished; one, the Kalki, is still future. Some of these Avatāras are of an entirely cosmical character; others, however, are probably based on historical events, the leading personage of which was gradually endowed with divine attributes, until he was regarded as the incarnation of the deity himself. In the 'Mātsya Purāna'† is the following legend, which

* Ward, ii. 14.

† Kennedy, 'Hindu Mythology,' p. 244.

gives a reason for the manifold and varied appearances of this deity:—

"The Asuras (demons, lit. Non-Suras) having been repeatedly defeated by the Suras (gods), and deprived of all share of the sacrifices, were meditating to withdraw from the unavailing contest, when Sukra, their preceptor, determined to propitiate Siva by a severe *tapas*, and procure from him a charm by means of which they could conquer. Having left them for this purpose, the Asuras said amongst themselves, 'As our preceptor has laid aside his arms and assumed the ascetic dress, how shall we be able to gain a victory over the Suras? Let us seek refuge with the mother of Kavya (Sukra), and endure this distress till he shall return; and then let us fight!' Having thus resolved, they hastened to Kavya's mother, who, protecting them, said, 'Fear not! remain near me, and no danger shall approach you!'

"The Suras, seeing the Asuras thus protected, were about to attack them, when the goddess in anger thus addressed Indra: 'If thou desist not, I will deprive you of the sovereignty of heaven.' Alarmed at her angry words, and dreading her magic power, Indra was yielding to her desire, when Vishnu appeared and said to him, 'Yield not, for I will assist you!' The goddess observing that Indra was protected by Vishnu, angrily said, 'Now let the contending foes behold how the power of my devotions shall subdue both Indra and Vishnu.' Finding themselves likely to be overcome, they asked each other, 'How shall we liberate ourselves from this difficulty?' Indra then said to Vishnu, 'Hasten to conquer before she has finished her invocations, or we shall be defeated!' Then Vishnu, considering the detriment that must be incurred by the gods should the mother of Kavya bring her incantations to a successful issue, deemed that the slaying of a woman under such circumstances was allowable, seized his discus, and smote off her head. Bhrigu, seeing this horrid deed of the slaughter of a woman and the death of his wife, was violently incensed, and thus cursed Vishnu: 'Since thou hast knowingly murdered a woman, thou shalt be born seven times amongst men;' he afterwards somewhat modified its force as he said, 'but each birth shall

be for the advantage of the world, and for the restoration of justice.

"It is interesting to know the character of the *tapas* (penance) by which Sukra hoped to gain power over the gods. He was to imbibe the smoke of a fire of chaff with his head downwards for a thousand years. He accomplished this difficult feat, and by it so pleased Siva, that he gave him many boons, including that of superiority over the gods. But the Asuras did not profit long by this penance of their preceptor, as they were deceived by the preceptor of the gods, who, assuming Sukra's form, gave them bad advice, which they followed to their hurt."

In the 'Vishnu Purāna'* the benefits to be hoped for from the worship of Vishnu are taught. The question is asked, "By what acts can men free themselves from Yama?" The reply given is that which was once told by a holy Muni who recollected his former births, and by whom "what was, and what will be, was accurately told." "Yama, beholding one of his servants with a noose in his hands, whispered to him and said, 'Keep clear of the worshippers of Madhusudana (Vishnu). I am lord of all men, the Vaishnavas (worshippers of Vishnu) excepted. I was appointed by Brahmā to restrain mankind, and regulate the consequences of good and evil in the universe. But he who worships Hari is independent of me. He who through holy knowledge diligently adores the lotus-foot of Hari is released from all the bonds of sin, and you must avoid him as you would fire fed with oil.' And again: 'He who pleases Vishnu obtains all terrestrial enjoyments, heaven, and a place in heaven; and what is best of all, final liberation; whatever he wishes, and to whatever extent, whether much or little, he receives it when Achyuta (the undecaying one) is content with him.'"

The means by which the favour of this god is to be obtained are then explained:—"The supreme Vishnu is propitiated by a man who observes the institutions of caste, order, and purificatory practices; no other path is the way to please him. He who offers sacrifices, sacrifices to him; he who murmurs prayer, prays

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to him; he who injures living creatures, injures him; for Hari is all things. Kesava is most pleased with him who does good to others; who never utters abuse, calumny, or untruth; who never covets another's wife or another's wealth, and who bears ill-will towards none; who never beats nor slays any animate or inanimate thing; who is ever diligent in the service of the gods, of the Brahmans, and of his spiritual preceptor; who is ever desirous of the welfare of all creatures, of his children, and of his own soul; in whose pure heart no pleasure is derived from the imperfections of love and hatred. The man who conforms to the duties enjoined by scriptural authority for every caste and condition of life is he who best worships Vishnu; there is no other mode."

Of all the deities now reverenced in India, Vishnu in his many forms has perhaps the largest number of worshippers; and the account of his life and the praises presented to him occupy a very large portion of the later Hindu Scriptures. This pre-eminence was certainly not recognised in the Vedic Age, as the following passage will show:—

"In the Rig-Veda are the following verses:—'May the gods preserve us from the place from which Vishnu strode over the seven regions of the earth. Vishnu strode over this [universe]; in three places he planted his step [the world or his step] was enveloped in his dust. Vishnu, the unconquerable preserver, strode three steps.'* In these verses there is probably the germ of the Dwarf Incarnation, and also of the attribute of Preserver. The interpretations of two commentators of the three strides of Vishnu are as follows:—One regards him 'as a god, who, in what are called his three strides, is manifested in a threefold form as Agni on earth, as Indra or Vayu in the atmosphere, and as the Sun in heaven;'† the other interprets Vishnu's three strides as 'the rising, culmination, and setting of the sun.'‡

Vishnu, in the Rig-Veda, is said "to have established the heavens and the earth; to contain all the world in his strides; to have, with Indra, made the atmosphere wide, stretched out the

* Muir, O. S. T., iv. 63. † Ibid. iv. 78 ff. ‡ Ibid.

worlds, produced the Sun, the Dawn, and Fire; to have received the homage of Varuna; whilst his greatness is described as having no limit within the ken of present or future beings. The attributes ascribed to Vishnu in some of these passages are such, that if the latter stood alone in the Rig-Veda, they might lead us to suppose that this deity was regarded by the Vedic Rishis as the chief of all the gods. But Indra is associated with Vishnu even in some of those texts in which the latter is most highly magnified: nay, in one place, the power by which Vishnu takes his three strides is described as being derived from Indra; in another text, Vishnu is represented as celebrating Indra's praise; whilst in another verse, Vishnu is said to have been generated by Soma. It is also a fact that the hymns and verses which are dedicated to the praises of Indra, Agni, &c., are extremely numerous, whilst the entire hymns and separate verses in which Vishnu is celebrated are much fewer . . . Vishnu is introduced as the subject of laudation among a crowd of other divinities, from which he is there in no way distinguished as being in any respect superior. From this fact we may conclude that he was regarded by those writers as on a footing of equality with the other deities. Further, the Rig-Veda contains numerous texts in which the Rishis ascribe to Indra, Varuna, and other gods, the same high and awful attributes and functions which are spoken of in other hymns as belonging to Vishnu . . . If then we look to the large number of texts in which some of the other gods are celebrated, and to the comparatively small number of those in which Vishnu is exclusively or prominently magnified, we shall come to the conclusion that the latter deity occupied a somewhat subordinate place in the estimation and affections of the ancient Rishis."*

Amongst the thousand names of Vishnu, the following, in addition to those already given, are most commonly known:—

Madhusudana, the destroyer of Madhu; and Kaitabhajit, the conqueror of Kaitabha. These two demons sprung from Vishnu's ear as he lay asleep on the serpent Sesha at the end of a Kalpa,† and were about to destroy Brahmā, who was on the lotus which

* Muir, O. S. T., iv. 98.

† See Part II. chap. x.

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sprung from Vishnu's navel, when this deity slew them, and hence obtained these names:—

Vaikunthanath, "The Lord of Paradise."
Kesava, "He who has excellent hair."
Madhava, "Made of honey, or a descendant of Madhu."
Swayambhu, "The self-existent one."
Pitamvara, "He who wears yellow garments."
Janarddana, "He who causes the people to worship."
Vishvamvara, "The protector of the world."
Hari, "The Saviour;" lit. he who takes possession of.
Ananta, "The endless."
Dāmodara, "Bound with a rope."
Mukunda, "The deliverer."
Purusha, "The man," or "The spirit."
Purushottama, "The supreme man or spirit."
Yajneswara, "The lord of sacrifice."

LAKSHMI.

Lakshmi, or very commonly Sri, is the wife of Vishnu, and under various names appears in this relation in his various incarnations. "As the lord of the worlds, the god of gods, Janārddana descends amongst mankind in various shapes, so does his coadjutor Sri. Thus when Hari was born a dwarf, the son of Aditi, Lakshmi appeared from the lotus as Padmā, or Kamalā; when he was born as Rāma (Parasurāma) of the race of Bhrigu, she was Dharānī; when he was Rāghava (Rāma), she was Sita; and when he was Krishna, she was Rukmini. In the other descents of Vishnu she was his associate. If he takes a celestial form, she appears as divine; if a mortal, she becomes a mortal too, transforming her own person agreeably to whatever character it pleases Vishnu to assume."*

There are two somewhat contradictory accounts of her origin; the 'Vishnu Purāna' explains this.† "The divinities Dhātā and Vidhātā were born to Bhrigu by Khyāti, as was a daughter

* 'Vishnu Purāna,' p. 86. † Page 59.

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Sri, the wife of Narayana, the God of Gods." The question is raised, "If it is commonly said that Sri was born from the sea of milk, when it was churned for ambrosia, how then can you say that she was the daughter of Bhrigu and Khyati?" In answer to this question, a most elaborate account of her virtues is given: "Sri, the bride of Vishnu, the mother of the world, is eternal, imperishable; as he is all-pervading, so she is omnipresent. Vishnu is meaning, she is speech; Hari is polity, she is prudence; Vishnu is understanding, she is intellect; he is righteousness, she is devotion; Sri is the earth, Hari is its support. In a word, of gods, animals, and men, Hari is all that is called male, Lakshmi is all that is termed female; there is nothing else than they." Later on we read, "Her first birth was as the daughter of Bhrigu and Khyati; it was at a subsequent period that she was produced from the sea, at the churning of the ocean by the demons and the gods."

The account of the churning of the ocean, to which frequent reference is made in the Hindu Scriptures, is found in the Ramayana, and several of the Puranas; though there are some discrepancies, they agree in the main. The reason for this great

* Vishnu Purana, p. 80.

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[illegible] A [illegible] Durvāsa's [illegible] of Siva [illegible] when he met a celestial nymph with a sweet-smelling garland, which at his request she gave to Durvāsa. Excited with the scent, he was dancing when he met Indra, seated on his elephant. To please the mighty god, the sage presented him with the garland, who placed it upon his elephant's head. The elephant in his turn becoming excited, seized the garland with his trunk and threw it upon the ground. Durvāsa, seeing his gift slighted, cursed the god in his anger, and told him that his kingdom should be overwhelmed with ruin. From that time Indra's power began to wane; for though he sought forgiveness, the Brāhman's anger was not to be appeased. As the effects of the curse were experienced by the gods, they, fearing they should be overcome by the Asuras, fled to Brahmā for help. He told them he could not assist them; that Vishnu alone could do this, whom he advised them to seek. Brahmā conducted them to Vishnu; and, having landed Vishnu, caused him to lend a willing ear to their request. In the following lines, spun into verse, from the 'Vishnu Purāna,' we have their prayer Vishnu's advice and its result:—

"The gods addressed the mighty Vishnu thus,—
'Conquered in battle by the evil demons,
We fly to thee for succour; soul of all,
Pity and by thy might deliver us!'
Hari, the lord, creator of the world,
Thus by the gods implored, all graciously
Replied, 'Your strength shall be restored, ye gods,—
Only accomplish what I now command:
Unite yourselves in peaceful combination
With these your foes; collect all plants and herbs
Of diverse kinds from every quarter; cast them
Into the sea of milk; take Mandara,
The mountain, for a churning stick, and Vāsuki,
The serpent, for a rope; together churn
The ocean to produce the beverage—
Source of all strength and immortality—
Then reckon on mine aid. I will take care

* 'Vishnu Purāna,' Book I. chap. ix. † 'Indian Wisdom,' p. [illegible]

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Your foes shall share your fold, but not partake
In as reward, or drink th' immortal draught.
Thus by the god of gods advised, the host
United in alliance with the demons.
Straight way they gathered various herbs, and cast them
Into the waters; then they took the mountain
To serve as churning-staff, and next the snake
To serve as cord, and in the ocean's midst
Hari himself, present in tortoise form,
Became a pivot for the churning-staff.
Then did they churn the sea of milk; and first
Out of the waters rose the sacred cow—
God-worshipped Surabhi—eternal fountain
Of milk and offerings of butter; next,
While holy Siddhas wondered at the sight,
With eyes all rolling, Vāruni uprose—
Goddess of Wine. Then from the whirlpool sprang
Fair Pārijāta, tree of Paradise, delight
Of heavenly maidens, with its fragrant blossoms
Perfuming the whole world. Th' Apsarasas,
Troop of celestial nymphs, matchless in grace,
Perfect in loveliness, were next produced.
Then from the sea uprose the cool-rayed moon,
Which Mahādeva seized; terrific poison
Next issued from the waters—this the snake-gods
Claimed as their own. Then seated on a lotus
Beauty's bright goddess, peerless Sri, arose
Out of the waves; and with her, robed in white,
Came forth Dhanvantari, the gods' physician.
High in his hand he bore the cup of nectar—
Life-giving draught—longed for by gods and demons."

On Sri's appearance the sages were enraptured, the heavenly choristers sang her praises, and the celestial nymphs danced before her. Gangā and the other sacred streams followed her, and the heavenly elephants took up their pure waters in golden vessels and poured them upon her. The sea of milk presented her with a wreath of unfading flowers; and the artist of the gods decorated her with lovely ornaments. Thus bathed, attired, and adorned, the goddess, in the presence of the gods, cast herself upon the breast of Hari, and, reclining there, gazed upon the gods, who were enraptured with her.

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Siva was most violent and wished to possess himself of her. From the demons she turned away; hence they were miserable. Seeing the cup of nectar, they tried to seize it, when Vishnu, assuming the appearance of a beautiful woman, attracted their attention, whilst the gods quaffed the divine cup. The result was that in the conflict which followed the gods were successful.

The following account of Sri is from the Rāmāyana:—

"When many a year had fled,
Up floated, on her lotus bed,
A maiden fair, and tender-eyed,
In the young flush of beauty's pride.
She shone with pearl and golden sheen,
And seals of glory stamped her queen.
On each round arm glowed many a gem,
On her smooth brows a diadem.
Rolling in waves beneath her crown,
The glory of her hair rolled down.
Pearls on her neck of price untold,
The lady shone like burnished gold.
Queen of the gods, she leapt to land,
A lotus in her perfect hand,
And fondly, of the lotus spring,
To lotus-bearing Vishnu clung.
Her, gods above and men below
As Beauty's Queen and Fortune know."*

As noticed in this last extract, Lakshmi, or Sri, is regarded as the goddess of Love, Beauty, and Prosperity. When a man is growing rich, it is said that Lakshmi has come to dwell with him; whilst those in adversity are spoken of as "forsaken of Lakshmi." In pictures she is painted as a lady of a bright golden colour, seated on a lotus, with two arms.

"The name of Lakshmi as that of a goddess does not occur in the Rig-Veda, though the word itself is found in its signification as prosperity."†

* Griffith's Rāmāyana, i. 204. † Muir, O. S. T., v. 311.

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[illegible] known also by the following names:—

[illegible] "The beloved of Hari."

Padma, "The Lotus," and Padmālaya, "She who dwells on a lotus."

Jaladhijā, "The ocean-born."

Chañchalā, "The fickle one."

Lokamātā, "The mother of the world."

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CHAPTER V.

THE INCARNATIONS OR AVATĀRAS OF VISHNU.

I. THE MATSYA OR FISH AVATĀRA.

The earliest account of what was afterwards regarded as an incarnation of Vishnu is found in the 'Sathapatha Brāhmana.' It will be noticed that though in this passage a wonderful fish is described, it is not said to have been an incarnation of any of the gods. The Mahābhārata says that Brahma assumed this form, whilst the Purānas teach that the fish here spoken of was Vishnu. This transfer of work from one deity to another is a matter of much surprise as we remember how frequently it is declared that all the various gods are but forms of one supreme being. "It should be noticed that the Manu here referred to is regarded as a progenitor of the human race, and is represented as conciliating the Supreme Being by his piety in an age of universal depravity." Here is the passage referred to above:

"There lived in ancient time a holy man
Called Manu, who, by penances and prayers,
Had won the favour of the lord of heaven.
One day they brought him water for ablution;
Then, as he washed his hands, a little fish
Appeared, and spoke in human accents thus:
'Take care of me, and I will be thy saviour.'
'From what wilt thou preserve me?' Manu asked.
The fish replied, 'A flood will sweep away
All creatures; I will rescue thee from that.'
'How shall I preserve thee?' Manu said.
The fish rejoined, 'So long as we are small,

'Indian Wisdom,' p. 3.

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THE MATSYA AVATARA.

We are in constant danger of destruction,
For fish eat fish; so keep me in a jar.
When I outgrow the jar, then dig a trench,
And place me there; when I outgrow the trench,
Then take me to the ocean,—I shall then
Be out of reach of danger.' Having thus
Instructed Manu, straightway rapidly
The fish grew larger; then he spake again:
'In such and such a year the flood will come;
Therefore construct a ship, and pay me homage.
When the flood rises, enter thou the ship,
And I will rescue thee.' So Manu did
As he was ordered, and preserved [illegible]
Then carried it in safety to the ocean;
And in the very year the fish enjoined
He built a ship, and paid the fish respect.
And there took refuge when the flood arose.
Soon near him swam the fish, and to its horn
Manu made fast the cable of his vessel.
Thus dragging along the waters, Manu passed
Beyond the northern mountain. Then the fish,
Addressing Manu, said, 'I have preserved thee;
Quickly attach the ship to yonder tree;
But, lest the waters sink from under thee,
As fast as they subside, so fast shalt thou
Descend the mountain gently after them.'
Thus he descended from the northern mountain.
The flood had swept away all living creatures;
Manu alone was left.

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The account from the Mahābhārata which now follows has also been put into verse by Professor Monier Williams[1]:—

'Along the ocean in that stately ship was borne the lord of men, and through
Its dancing, tumbling billows, and its roaring waters; and the bark,
Tossed to and fro by violent winds, reeled on the surface of the deep,
Staggering and trembling like a drunken woman. Land was seen no
more.
Nor far horizon, nor the space between; for everywhere around
Spread the wild waste of waters, reeking atmosphere, and boundless sky.
And now when all the world was deluged, nought appeared above the
waves
But Manu and the seven sages, and the fish that drew the bark.
Unwearied, thus for years on years the fish propelled the ship across
The heaved-up waters, till at length it bore the vessel to the peak
Of Himavān; then softly smiling, thus the fish addressed the sage:
"Haste, now, to bind thy ship to this high crag. Know me, the lord of all,
The great Creator Brahmā, mightier than all might, omnipotent.
By me, in fishlike shape, hast thou been saved in dire emergency.
From Manu all creation, gods, Asurās, men, must be produced;
By him all the world must be created—that which moves and moveth not."

The typical Purānic account of this Avatāra is that of the 'Bhāgavata Purāna' which is given by Sir William Jones in the Asiatic Soc. Res.[2] With this the accounts in the other Purānas agree in the main: some are more condensed, others, as the 'Matsya Purāna,' are considerably extended; for it was as the fish was guiding the vessel in which Manu was saved that Vishnu, in this form, is said to have dictated the whole of that Purāna. All the Purānas agree in regarding the fish as an incarnation of Vishnu, and not of Brahmā. Now follows the account from the Bhāgavata:—

"Desiring the preservation of herds, Brāhmans, genii, and virtuous men,—of the Vedas, of law, and of precious things,—the Lord of the Universe assumes many bodily shapes; but though he pervades, like the air, a variety of beings, yet he is himself unvaried, since he has no qualities subject to change. At the close of the last Kalpa there was a general destruction, occa-

[1] 'Indian Wisdom,' p. 394. [2] Vol. i. 230 ff.

stolen by the sleeping Brahmā, whence his creatures in different worlds were drowned in a vast ocean. Brahmā being inclined to slumber, desiring repose after a lapse of ages, the strong demon Hayagriva came near him, and stole the Vedas, which had flowed from his lips.

When Hari, the preserver of the universe, discovered this deed of the prince of the Dānavas, he took the shape of a minute fish, called Sāphari. A holy king named Satyavrāta then reigned, a servant of the spirit which moved on the waves; and so devout, that water was his only sustenance. He was the child of the Sun, and in the present Kalpa* is invested by Nārāyana with the office of Manu (*i.e.* the progenitor and lord of men), by the name of Sraddhādevā, or the god of obsequies. One day as he was making a libation in the river Kritamāla, and held water in the palm of his hand, he perceived a small fish moving in it. The King of Dravira immediately dropped the fish into the river, together with the water, which he had taken from it; when the Sāphari thus addressed the benevolent monarch: 'How canst thou, O king, who showest affection to the oppressed, leave me in this river water, where I am too weak to resist the monsters of the stream, who fill me with dread?' He, not knowing that he had assumed the form of a fish, applied his mind to the preservation of the Sāphari, both from good-nature and from regard to his own soul; and having heard his very suppliant address, he kindly placed it under his protection in a small vase full of water; but in a single night its bulk was so increased, that it could not be contained in the jar, and thus again addressed the illustrious prince: 'I am not pleased with living miserably in this little vase; make me a large mansion, where I may dwell in comfort.' The king, removing it thence, placed it in the water of a cistern; but it grew three cubits in less than fifty minutes, and said, 'O king! it pleases me not to stay vainly in this narrow cistern; since thou hast granted me an asylum, give me a spacious habitation.' He then removed it and placed it in a pool, where, having ample space around its body, it became a fish of consider-

* See Part II. chap. 1.

able size.' 'This abode, O king, is not convenient for me, who must swim at large in the waters; exert thyself for my safety and remove me to a deep lake!' Thus addressed, the pious monarch threw the suppliant into a lake, and, when it grew of equal bulk with that piece of water, he cast the vast fish into the sea. When the fish was thrown into the waves, he thus again spoke to Satyavrata: 'Here the horned sharks and other monsters of great strength will devour me; thou shouldest not, O valiant man, leave me in this ocean.'

"Thus repeatedly deluded by the fish, who had addressed him with gentle words, the king said, 'Who art thou that beguilest me in that assumed shape? Never before have I seen or heard of so prodigious an inhabitant of the waters, who, like thee, has filled up in a single day a lake a hundred leagues in circumference. Surely thou art Bhagavat, who appears before me, the great Hari, whose dwelling was on the waves; and who now, in compassion to thy servants, bears the form of the natives of the deep. Salutation and praise to thee, O first male, the lord of creation, of preservation, of destruction! Thou art the highest object, the supreme ruler, of us thy adorers, who piously seek thee. All thy delusive descents in this world give existence to various beings; yet I am anxious to know for what cause that shape has been assumed by thee. Let me not, O lotus-eyed, approach in vain the feet of a deity whose perfect benevolence has been extended to all; when thou hast shown us, to our amazement, the appearance of other bodies, not in reality existing, but successively exhibited.'

"The lord of the universe, loving the pious man who thus implored him, and intending to preserve him from the sea of destruction caused by the depravity of the age, thus told him how he was to act: 'In seven days from the present time, O thou tamer of enemies! the three worlds will be plunged in an ocean of death; but, in the midst of the destroying waves, a large vessel sent by me for thy use shall stand before thee. Then thou shalt take all medicinal herbs, all the varieties of seeds, and accompanied by seven saints, encircled by pairs of brute animals, thou shalt enter the spacious ark, and continue in

it secure from the flood, on one immense ocean without light, except the radiance of thy holy companions. When the ship shall be agitated with an impetuous wind, thou shalt fasten it with a large sea serpent on my horn; for I will be near thee, drawing the vessel, with thee and thy attendants. I will remain on the ocean, O chief of men, until a night of Brahmā * shall be completely ended. Thou shalt then know my true greatness, rightly named the Supreme Godhead; by my favour all thy questions shall be answered, and thy mind abundantly instructed.'

Hari, having thus directed the monarch, disappeared; and Satyavrāta humbly waited for the time which the ruler of our senses had appointed. The pious king having scattered toward the east the pointed blades of the grass *darbha*, and turning his face towards the north, sat meditating on the feet of the god, who had borne the form of a fish. The sea, overwhelming its shores, deluged the whole earth, and it was soon perceived to be augmented by showers from immense clouds. He, still meditating on the command of Bhāgavat, saw the vessel advancing, and entered it with the chiefs of Brāhmans, having carried into it the medicinal plants, and conformed to the directions of Hari. The saints thus addressed him: 'O king, meditate on Kesava; who will surely deliver us from this danger, and grant us prosperity.' The god being invoked by the monarch, appeared again distinctly on the vast ocean in the form of a fish, blazing like gold, extending a million of leagues, with one stupendous horn; on which the king, as he had been before commanded by Hari, tied the ship with a cable made of a vast serpent, and, happy in his preservation, stood praising the destroyer of Madhu. When the monarch had finished his hymn, the primeval male, Bhāgavat, who watched for his safety on the greater expanse of water, spake aloud to his own divine essence, pronouncing a sacred Purāna [the 'Matsya Purāna'], which contained the rules of the Sankhya philosophy; but it was an infinite mystery to be concealed within the breast of Satyavrāta; who, sitting in the vessel with the saints, heard the principle of

* See Part II. chap. x.

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"I, the Eternal Being, proclaimed by the preserving power of Hari, rising together with Brahma from the destructive ceilings, which was now abated, slew the demon Hayagriva, and recovered the sacred books."

2. THE KŪRMA OR TORTOISE AVATĀRA.

This incarnation was necessitated by the fact that the gods were in danger of losing their authority over the demons. In their distress they applied to Vishnu for help, who told them to churn the sea of milk that they might procure the *Amrita*, or water of life, by which they would be made strong, and promised to become the tortoise on which the mountain Mandara as a churning stick should rest. As a full account of this operation has been already given when describing Lakshmi, who was one of its chief products, there is no necessity to repeat it here. A few additional particulars will be found in the following extract from the 'Vishnu Purāna:'*—

"Hari having been entreated to help the gods, thus spoke: 'I will restore your strength. Do you act as I enjoin. Let all the gods and Asuras cast all sorts of medicinal herbs into the sea of milk, and together churn the ocean for ambrosia, depending on my aid. To secure the assistance of the Daityas, you must be at peace with them, and engage to give them an equal share of your associated toil; promising them that by drinking of the Amrita . . . they shall become mighty and immortal. I will take care that the enemies of the gods shall not partake of the precious draught; they shall only share in the labour.'"

The gods entered into an arrangement with the Asuras, and together they made the necessary preparations. "The assembled gods were stationed by Krishna at the tail of the serpent Vasuki (the churning rope), and the Daityas and Dānavas at its head and neck. Scorched by the flames emitted from his inflated hood, the demons were shorn of their glory; whilst the clouds,

* Page 73.

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driven by his breath towards his tail, refreshed the gods by vivifying showers. In the midst of the milky sea, Hari himself, in the form of a tortoise, served as a pivot for the mountain, as it was whirled around. The holder of the mace and discus was present in other forms amongst the gods and demons, and assisted to drag the monarch of the serpent race; and in another vast body sat upon the summit of the mountain. With one portion of his energy, unseen by gods and demons, he sustained the serpent king; and with another infused vigour unto the gods."

THE KŪRMA AVATĀRA.

Such is the account of this incarnation of Vishnu as taught by the Purānas; but in the earlier books, where the probable origin of this legend is found, it is Brahmā, and not Vishnu, that is said to have assumed the form of a tortoise. In the 'Satha-patha Brāhmana' are these words: "Having assumed the form of a tortoise, Prajāpati (Brahmā) created offspring. That which he created, he made;" hence the word Kūrma. Kasyapa means tortoise: hence men say, "All creatures are descendants of Kasyapa. This tortoise is the same as Aditya." As the worship of Brahmā became less popular, whilst that of Vishnu increased in its attraction, the names, attributes, and works of the one deity appear to have been transferred to the other.

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3. THE VARAHAR OR BOAR AVATARA.

There is the same conflicting account of this as of the two preceding incarnations;—the older books, and some of the more modern ones, describing it as an Avatāra of Brahmā; and some of the modern books and popular belief regarding it as the work of *Vishnu*. There is, however, this distinction, that "in the former, the transformation of the deity into a boar has apparently a purely cosmical character," the earth being immersed in the ocean. Brahmā, the Creator, in the shape of a boar, raised it on his tusk; "whereas, in the latter, it altogether represents the extrication of the world from a deluge of iniquity by the rites of religion."*

The first mention of this incarnation is in the 'Taittirya Sanhita,† and is as follows:—"The universe (was formerly) water, fluid. On it Prajāpati (Brahmā) becoming wind, moved. Becoming a boar, he took it up." In harmony with this is a verse in the 'Taittirya Brāhmana':—"This universe was formerly water, *fluid*. With that (water) Prajapati practised arduous devotions (saying), '*How shall this* universe be (developed)?' He beheld a lotus leaf standing. He thought, '*There is* something on which *this* rests.' He as a boar—having assumed that form—plunged beneath towards it. He found the earth down below. Breaking off (a portion of) her, he rose to the surface." In the 'Sathapatha Brāhmana'‡ there is a similar reference, but there the boar is called "Emusha." Formerly the earth was only of the size of a span. A boar called Emusha raised her up.

Dr. Muir§ gives two accounts of this incarnation from two recensions of the Rāmāyana. In one, which he considers the older, it is said that Brahmā assumed the form of a boar; in the other, Vishnu *in the form of Brahmā* is said to have accomplished the work. The alteration of the text is very noticeable. "All was water only, in which the earth was formed. Thence arose

* Goldstucker, Chambers's Cyclopædia, x. v. Vishnu.
† Muir, O. S. T., i. 52. ‡ Ibid., iv. 23. § Ibid.

Brahmā, the self-existent, and the deities. He then becoming a boar, raised up the earth, and created the whole world with the saints his sons." So far the probably older recension. In the latter one we read, "All was water only, through which the earth was formed. Thence arose Brahmā, the self-existent, the imperishable Vishnu. He then, becoming a boar, raised up this earth and created the whole world."

In the following account from the 'Vishnu Purāna'* it will be noticed that, as in the last quotation from the Rāmāyana, it was Vishnu in the form of Brahmā who became a boar. As the earlier writers had declared this to have been Brahmā's work, it was necessary to identify Vishnu with him.

"Tell me how at the commencement of the present age, Nārāyana, who is named Brahmā, created all existing things. At the close of the last age, the divine Brahmā, endowed with the quality of goodness, awoke from his night of sleep, and beheld the universal void. He, the supreme Nārāyana, . . . invested with the form of Brahmā, . . . concluding that within the waters lay the earth, and being desirous to raise it up, created another form for that purpose. And as in the preceding ages he had assumed the shape of a fish, or a tortoise, so in this he took the form of a boar. Having adopted a form composed of the sacrifices of the Vedas for the preservation of the whole earth, the eternal, supreme, and universal soul plunged into the ocean." In a note on this passage in the 'Vishnu Purāna,' by Professor Wilson, it is stated that, according to the 'Vāyu Purāna,' the form of a boar was chosen because it is an animal delighting in water; but in other Purānas, as in the Vishnu, it is said to be a type of the triad of the Vedas, for which reason the elevation of the earth on the tusks of a boar is regarded as an allegorical representation of the extrication of the world from a deluge of sin, by the rites of religion.

The earth, bowing with devout adoration, addressed the god as he approached in a hymn of great beauty, in which she reminds him that she sprang from him, and is dependent on him

* Page 27 ff.

[illegible] charming of the Sa[illegible] the mighty boar, whose eyes were like the lotus [illegible] body was vast as the Nila mountains, and of the dark colour of the lotus leaves, uplifted upon his ample tusks the earth from its lowest regions. As he reared up his head, the waters that rushed from his brow purified the great sages, Sanandana and others residing in the sphere of the saints. Through the indentations made by his hoofs, the waters rushed into the lower worlds with a thundering noise. Before his breath, the pious denizens of Janaloka (abode of men) were scattered, and the Munis sought for shelter amongst the bristles upon the body of the boar, trembling as he rose up supporting the earth, and dripping with moisture. Then the great sages Sanandana and the rest, residing continually in the sphere of the saints, were inspired with delight, and bowing lowly, they praised the stern-eyed upholder of the earth.

Before noticing the hymn of these saints, in which the boar is identified with the various parts of worship, we can gather a little more information from the other Puranas respecting the dimensions, &c., of this animal. The Vāyu says, "The boar was ten Yojanas* in breadth, and a thousand Yojanas in height; his colour was like a dark cloud, and his roar like thunder. His bulk was vast as a mountain; his tusks were white, sharp, and fearful; fire flashed from his eyes like lightning, and he was radiant as the sun. His shoulders were round, fat, and large; he strode along like a powerful lion; his haunches were fat, his loins slender, and his body smooth and beautiful." With this the Matsya agrees. The Bhāgavata describes the boar "as issuing from the nostrils of Brahmā, at first of the size of a thumb, and presently increasing to the size of an elephant." This Purāna adds a legend of the slaying of Hiranyāksha, who, in a former birth, was a doorkeeper of Vishnu's [illegible]. He having refused admission to a number of Munis [illegible] enraged them, that they cursed him; in consequence [illegible] he was

* A Yojan is at least four miles and a half; some reckon [illegible] miles.

[illegible] in the waters [illegible] of raising it. Hiranyaksha claimed the ea[illegible] Vishnu, they fought, and the demon was slain.

Now follow the hymns to the Varāhai [illegible] by the saints: "Triumph, lord of lords, supreme! Kesava, sovereign of the earth ... cause of production, destruction and existence. *Thou art, O god!* there is none other supreme condition than thou. Thou, lord, art the person of the sacrifice; *thy feet are the Vedas*; thy tusks are the stake to which the victim is bound; thy teeth are the offerings; thy mouth is the altar; thy tongue is the fire; and the hairs of thy body are the sacrificial grass. Thy eyes, O omnipotent! are day and night; thy head is the seat of all — the place of Brahmā; thy mane is all the hymns of the Vedas; thy nostrils are all oblations. O thou, whose snout is the ladle of oblation; whose deep voice is the chanting of the Sama-Veda; whose body is the hall of sacrifice; whose joints are the different ceremonies; and whose ears have the properties of both voluntary and obligatory rites. So thou, who art eternal, who art in size a mountain, be propitious ... raise up this earth for the habitation of created beings!"

"The supreme being thus eulogised, upholding the earth, [illegible] quickly and placed [illegible] the summit of the ocean, where [illegible] like a mighty vessel and on account of its expansive [illegible] does not sink beneath the waters." This seems rather [illegible] the common notion of the Hindus, that the earth [illegible] the back of a tortoise, and that earthquakes are the result of the tortoise changing the foot on which he stands, when weary.

THE NRISINGHA OR MAN-LION AVATĀRA.

In the account of the preceding incarnation, it was stated that Vishnu [illegible] he raised the earth on his tusk, slew a demon named [illegible]ksha. This Daitya had a brother named Hiranya[illegible] who, the 'Vāya Purāna' says, had obtained a boon fr[illegible], that he should not be slain by any created

being [illegible] Purana [illegible], excepting Vishnu. When therefore his pride, fostered by his supposed immunity from danger, had led him to great excesses, so that his death was desired both

THE NRISINGHA AVATĀRA.

by gods and men, Vishnu descended in the form of a living being, half-man and half-lion, and so neither man nor animal, and slew him. By the assumption of this form the *letter* of Brahma's promise was kept. As the story of this demon's hatred of Vishnu, arising from the fact that that deity had slain his brother, and of the wonderful efficacy of the worship of Vishnu, is one of the most interesting narratives in the Purānas.

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it is given at some length. It is taken mostly from the Vishnu Purāna.*

"Hiranyakasipu, the son of Diti, had formerly brought the three worlds under his authority, confiding in a boon bestowed upon him by Brahmā. He had usurped the sovereignty of Indra, and exercised himself the functions of the sun, of air, of the lord of waters, of fire, and of the moon. He himself was the god of riches; he was the judge of the dead; and he appropriated to himself without reserve all that was offered in sacrifice to the gods. The deities, therefore, flying from their seats in heaven, wandered, through fear of the Daitya, upon the earth, disguised in mortal shapes. Having conquered the three worlds, he was inflated with pride, and, eulogised by the Gandharvas, enjoyed whatever he desired."

This demon had a son named Prahlāda, who was a most devout worshipper of Vishnu, whom his father hated most intensely. "On one occasion Prahlāda came, accompanied by his teacher, to the court of his father, and bowed himself before his feet as he was drinking. Hiranyakasipu desired his prostrate son to rise, and said to him, 'Repeat in substance and agreeably what during the period of your studies you have acquired.' Prahlāda said, 'I have learned to admire him who is without beginning, middle, or end, increase or diminution; the imperishable lord of the world, the universal cause of causes.' On hearing these words, the sovereign of the Daityas, his eyes red with wrath and lips swollen with indignation, turned to the preceptor of his son, and said, 'Vile Brāhman! what is this preposterous commendation of my foe that, in disrespect to me, you have taught this boy to utter?' The preceptor denies the charge, and Prahlāda himself replies, 'Vishnu is the instructor of the whole world; what else should any one learn or teach, save him, the supreme spirit?' 'Blockhead!' exclaimed the king, 'who is this Vishnu, whose name you thus reiterate so impertinently before me, who am the sovereign of the three worlds?' 'The glory of Vishnu' replied Prahlāda, 'is to be

* Page 125 ff.

[illegible] asks Samvara, the mightiest of enchanters, to try his [illegible] but though he puts forth all his skill, the boy remains [illegible]. After this, the prince goes again to his preceptor's [illegible] where he is instructed in politics. When his education [illegible] science was completed, he is taken to the king for [illegible] nation; but on being questioned as to his mode of [illegible] ment, he admits that though he has been instructed in [illegible] subjects, he does not approve of what his teachers had [illegible] and again sings the praises of Vishnu. His father, "burning [illegible] ge, exclaimed, 'Bind him with strong bands and cast him [illegible] e ocean. Death is the just retribution of the disobedient.' [illegible] aityas bound the prince with strong bands, as their lord [illegible] mmanded, and threw him into the sea. As he floated on [illegible] ters, the ocean was convulsed throughout its whole extent [illegible] e in mighty undulations, threatening to submerge th[illegible] When Hiranyakasipu observed this, he commanded t[illegible] to hurl rocks into the sea, and pile them closely on [illegible] burying beneath their incumbent mass him whom [illegible] ot burn. . . . 'Here, since he cannot die, let him li[illegible] ds of years at the bottom of the ocean, overwhelm[illegible] us.' This was done. But Prahlāda was un[illegible] d was filled with thoughts of Hari, and he [illegible] e his real identity with Vishnu. As soon as [illegible] the force of contemplation had become [illegible] the bands with which he was bound bur[illegible] Prahlāda, after hymning the praises of V[illegible] his father, who no sooner saw him, th[illegible] rehead, embraced him, and shed t[illegible] , my son?'"

[illegible] there was complete reconciliatio[illegible] cery cursory manner does the [illegible] th of Hiranyakasipu. Afte[illegible] en the father and son, wit[illegible] t goes on to say: "A[illegible] y Vishnu in the fo[illegible] ign of the Da[illegible]

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his father in fact was everywhere. "Hiranyakasipu says, 'If Vishnu is everywhere, is he not visible in this pillar?' told that Vishnu, though unseen, was really present then struck the pillar, saying, 'Then I will kill him.' Immed Vishnu, in the form of a being, half-man and half-lion, forth from the pillar, laid hold of Hiranyakasipu by the with his teeth, and tore him up the middle. Brahmā's b this Daitya king, as a reward of his religious observance that no common animal should destroy him, that he sho neither in the day nor night, in earth or in heaven, by water, or by the sword. This promise was kept in the for it was evening when Vishnu slew him: and this is n day nor night. It was done under the droppings of the t and this, according to a Hindu proverb, is out of the ear was not killed by a man or any common animal."*

5. THE VĀMANA OR DWARF AVATĀRA.

four Avatāras that have been described are said d in the Satya-yuga, or age of Truth, correspond len age of classic writers; it was in the Treta- e, that this incarnation is supposed to have easy to see how this belief could be forn the story of Prahlāda be regarded as a true -yuga, it was not very far superior to the worst of all.

ation as a dwarf was undertaken to Bali, the grandson of Prahlāda, w ishnu appears before him as a dw grants him what he asks,—all strides. Vishnu places on h, and at once regains the " † gives the following

The battle between the gods and Asuras for the possession of the Amrita produced at the churning of the ocean, the demons were defeated. Bali prepared a costly sacrifice in order that he might regain his power. As he presented his offerings to the sacred fire, he obtained from it a wondrous car drawn by four white horses, a banner displaying a lion, and celestial armour and weapons. The sacred rites being finished, Bali raised a large army, and in his newly-acquired chariot went and laid siege to Amravati, the capital of Indra's heaven. The gods in terror turned to their preceptor for advice; who told them that their enemies had been rendered invincible by penance. On hearing this, they were greatly alarmed, and Indra besought Vrihaspati to tell them what should be done. His advice was that they should forsake Amravati, assume other forms, and find a home elsewhere. The gods obeyed; Indra became a peacock, Kuvera a lizard, &c., in which disguises they went to the hermitage of Kasyapa, to whom they related their misfortunes. On hearing their story, the sage immediately desired his wife Aditi to perform a severe penance, in order that she might induce Vishnu to

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becoming her son. That through him the gods might be restored to heaven.

As the origin of this incarnation is probably found in the mythphorical language of the Vedas, it will be well to consider the teaching of the Hindu Scriptures as far as possible in chronological order.

It seems clear that the legend just quoted from the 'Skanda Purana' was written as an answer to the question why Vishnu had appeared in this form. In the Rig-Veda * the germ of the story is found: "Vishnu strode over this [universe]; in three places he planted his step." This passage is interpreted by the commentators in various ways. One thought "that the triple manifestation of the god in the form of fire on earth, of lightning in the atmosphere, and of the solar light in the sky was intended in this hymn." Another understands the three steps of Vishnu to represent "the different positions of the sun at his rising, his culmination, and his setting." According to him, therefore, Vishnu is simply the sun. Frequently in the Rig-Veda the term "wide-stepping" is applied to Vishnu, an evident allusion to his three steps.

In the 'Sathapatha Brâhman,' † the simple statement respecting Vishnu's strides assumes a larger form. "The gods and the Asuras, who both sprung from Prajâpati, strove together. Then the gods were worsted; and the Asuras said, 'This world is now certainly ours! Let us divide this earth, and let us subsist thereon.' The gods heard of it and said, 'The Asuras are dividing the earth: come, we will go to the spot where they are dividing it!' Placing at their head Vishnu, the sacrifice, they proceeded [thither], and said, 'Put us with yourselves in possession of this earth; let us have a share of it.' The Asuras grudgingly said, 'We will give you as much as this Vishnu can lie upon.' Now Vishnu was a dwarf. The gods did not reject this offer. They placed Agni in the East, and thus they went on toiling and worshipping. By this means they acquired the whole earth."

The next form of this legend is that of the Rāmāyana

* Muir, O. S. T., iv. 63–156. † Ibid.

Visvarpita, a sage, addressing Rama, tells him the [illegible] "Born of Bali, the son of Virochana, after conquering [illegible] of the gods, enjoyed the empire of the three worlds, into [illegible] with the increase of his power. When Bali was celebrating a sacrifice, Indra and the other gods addressed Vishnu in this hermitage [saying], 'That mighty Bali is now performing sacrifice; he who grants the desire of all creatures; the prosperous lord of the Asuras. Whatever suppliants wait upon him he bestows on them whatever [they wish]. Do thou take the form of a dwarf, and bring about our highest welfare. [Kasyapa now appears, and, after praising Vishnu, asks a boon, that Vishnu will be born as the son of Aditi and himself.] Thus addressed by the gods, Vishnu took the form of a dwarf, and, approaching the son of Virochana, begged three of his own paces. Having obtained three paces, Vishnu assumed a miraculous form, and with three paces took possession of the world. With one step he occupied the whole earth; with a second, the eternal atmosphere; and with a third, the sky. Having assigned to the Asura Bali an abode in Pātāla (the infernal region), he gave the empire of the world to Indra."

The notice of this Avatāra in the Mahābhārata is not lengthy. Vishnu is represented as foretelling it to Nārada. "The great Asura Bali shall be indestructible by all beings, including gods, Asuras, and Rākshasas. He shall oust Indra; and when the three worlds have been taken by Bali, and Indra put to flight, I shall be born in the form of the twelve Adityas, the son of Kasyapa and Diti. I will then restore his kingdom to Indra, reinstate the gods in their several positions, and place Bali in Pātāla."

The 'Vishnu Purāna' barely notices this event, but it is fully described in the Bhāgavata. The question is there asked, "Why did Hari, the lord of creatures, ask, like a poor man, three pieces of land from Bali? And why, when he had obtained his object, did he bind him? And why was an innocent being bound by the lord of sacrifice?" The answer given is as follows:—After Bali had been killed by Indra, he was restored by the Brāhmans of the race of Bhrigu, who consecrated him for supreme dominion,

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[illegible] formed a sacrifice to obtain it for him." He then sets out [illegible]yati as before narrated; and Indra is told, when he [illegible] to his preceptor for advice, that Bali had obtained this power "by virtue of the Brāhman's sacrifice;" and that, save by Hari, he is unconquerable. "He now reaps the fruit of Brāhmanical power; through contempt of these same Brāhmans he shall perish with all his descendants."

The gods forsake their capital, which is occupied by Bali. Aditi, the mother of the gods, is distressed as she sees the condition of her children; and acting upon the advice of her husband, propitiates Vishnu, who says: "I shall with a portion of myself become thy son, and deliver thy children. Wait upon thy husband, the sinless Prajāpati, virtuous female, meditating upon me, who in this form abide within him." Aditi followed the advice of the god; and Kasyapa knew by meditation that a portion of Hari had entered into him. In due time the son was born, and became a dwarfish Brāhmanical student.

As the Bhrigus are performing a sacrifice for Bali on the banks of the Narmada river, this dwarf visits Bali at Indra's heaven. "Acquainted with his duty, Bali placed upon his head the auspicious water with which the Brāhman's feet had been washed, and said, 'Welcome to thee, O Brāhman! What can we do for thee? Ask of me, student, whatever thou desirest. Son of a Brāhman, I conclude thou art a suppliant; ask a cow, pure gold, an embellished house, food and drink, a Brāhman's daughter, flourishing villages, horses, elephants, and carriages.' The dwarf concludes a speech with the semblance of moderation as follows: "I ask from thee a small portion of ground, three paces measured step by step. I desire no more from thee. A wise man incurs no sin, when he asks [only] as much as he needs." The king, though astonished at the smallness of the request, takes a vessel of water in his hand, and is about to confirm the gift; when his preceptor, seeing through Vishnu's device, tries to dissuade his pupil. In a long speech he tries to show that rather than be left homeless it would be better for him to break his word. But the king persists in fulfilling his promise; even though cursed by his preceptor for doing so. With two steps

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Vishnu strode over the universe; there was nowhere for him to take a third.

The gods congratulate Hari; Bali is bound by Garuda, and then reproached by Vishnu for not fulfilling his promise. "Asura, three paces of ground were given to me by thee; with two paces the entire world has been traversed; find a place for the third. As thou hast not given what was promised, it is my pleasure that thou shouldst dwell in the infernal regions. That man falls downward who, after promising a Brāhman, does not deliver to him what he had solicited. I have been deluded by thee." Bali offers his head as a place for Vishnu's foot, saying, "I fear not the infernal regions so much as a bad name." Bali goes to Pātāla, and is there visited by his grandfather Prahlāda. First Vishnu's wife and then Brahmā intercede with Vishnu on his behalf, who in reply promises that Bali shall again become Indra; but that in the meantime he must dwell in Sutala, where "by my will neither mental nor bodily pains, nor fatigue, nor weariness, nor discomfiture, nor diseases afflict the inhabitants." Bali gladly left Pātāla, and went to Sutala, to wait until the time came when, in accordance with the promise of Vishnu, he should again rule over gods and men.

The Hindus declare that Vishnu gave Bali the choice of going to heaven, taking with him five ignorant people, or of going to hell with five wise. He chose the latter, for there is no pleasure anywhere in the company of the ignorant; a bad place with good company being preferable.

6. THE PARASURĀMA AVATĀRA.

The incarnation of Parasurāma, or Rāma with axe, was undertaken by Vishnu for the purpose of exterminating the Kshattriya, or Warrior caste,* which had tried to assert its

* There are four chief castes or jātis of Hindus; the Brāhman, or Priest; the Kshattriya, or Warrior; the Vaisya, or Merchant; and the Sudra, or Servant. These four classes are now commonly said to have sprung respectively from the head, arms, thighs, and feet of the Creator, though there

[illegible] the [illegible] of those men, [illegible] means some few were preserved who were able to perpetuate the race. It will be noticed that the scene of Vishnu's exploits in this Avatāra, and in those also which follow it, was the earth; and not, as in those preceding, the abode of the gods.

The following legend of the birth of Parasurāma is from the 'Vishnu Purāna.'* A man named Gadhi, who was himself an incarnation of Indra, had a daughter named Satyavati. Richika, a descendant of Bhrigu,† demanded her in marriage. The king asked from the decrepit old Brāhman a thousand fleet white horses, each having one black ear, as a wedding present. These horses were obtained, by the help of Varuna, and the Brāhman received the hand of the princess.

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In order to effect the birth of a son, Richika prepared a dish of rice, barley, and pulse, with butter and milk, for

[illegible] reason for the belief that in the olden time no such ideas of the [illegible] of caste prevailed.

* Page 40[illegible]

† See Part III. chap. i.

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husband to wife, and at her request consecrated a similar mess for her mother, by partaking of which she should give birth to a prince of martial prowess. Leaving both dishes with his wife after carefully describing which was for herself and which for her mother, the sage went away into the forest. When the time for eating the food came, the queen said to Satyavati "Daughter! all children wish their children to be possessed of excellent qualities, and would be mortified to see them surpassed by the merits of their mother's brother. Give me, therefore, the mess your husband has set apart for you, and you eat that which was intended for me. The son which it is intended to procure for me, is destined to be the monarch of the whole world; whilst that which your dish will give you must be a Brāhman, alike devoid of affluence, valour, and power." Satyavati consented to this proposal, and they exchanged messes.

On Richika's return, perceiving what his wife had done, he said, "Sinful woman! what hast thou done? I see thy body of a fearful appearance. Thou hast eaten of the consecrated food that was prepared for thy mother; thou hast done wrong. In that food I had infused the properties of [illegible] and strength and heroism; in thine, the qualities su[illegible] a Brāhman, gentleness, knowledge, and resignation. In consequence of having reversed my plans, thy son s[illegible] follow a warrior's propensities, and use weapons, and fight, and slay. Thy mother's son shall be born with the inclinations of a Brāhman, and be addicted to peace and piety." Satyavati hearing this, fell at her husband's feet, and asked that she might not have such a son as he had described; "but if such there must be, let it be my grandson, and not my son." The Muni relented, and said, "So be it." Accordingly in due time she gave birth to a son named Jamadagni, who married Renukā, and had by her the destroyer of the Kshattriya race, Parasurāma, who was a portion of Nārāyana, the spiritual guide of the universe.

This is all we find about Parasurāma's work in the 'Vishnu Purāna.' The story of his exploits is told at length twice over in the Mahābhārata, and is found in the Bhāgavata, Padma,

Agni Purāna. The following account is from the Mahābhārata.[1]

Jamadagni (the son of Richika, whose birth was just described) having married Renukā, "conducted the princess to his hermitage, and she was contented to partake in his ascetic life. They had four sons, and then a fifth, who was Jamadagnya (Parasurāma), the last, but not the least, of the brethren. Once when her sons were all absent gathering the fruits on which they fed, Renukā, who was exact in the discharge of all her duties, went forth to bathe. On her way to the stream she beheld Chitraratha, the prince of Mrittikāvati, with a garland of lotuses on his neck, sporting with his queen in the water, and she felt curious of their felicity. Defiled by unworthy thoughts, wetted, but not purified by the stream, she returned disquieted to the hermitage. Beholding her fallen from her perfection, and shorn of the lustre of her sanctity, Jamadagni reproved her, and was exceeding wroth.

"Upon this, her sons came from the wood, and each as he entered was successively commanded by his father to put his mother to death, but, amazed and influenced by natural affection, neither [illegible] made any reply; therefore Jamadagni cursed them, [illegible] became idiots. Lastly Rāma returned to the hermitage, [illegible] the mighty and holy Jamadagni said to him, 'Kill thy mother, who has sinned; and do it without repining.' Rāma accordingly took up his axe [this was the parasu, or axe, which [illegible] had given him] and struck off his mother's head; [illegible] the wrath of Jamadagni was assuaged, [illegible] said: 'Since thou hast obeyed my [illegible] pleased with his sol[illegible] it was hard to be performed, demand commands, and done wh[illegible] thou wilt, and thy desires shall be from me whatever blessing these boons: the restoration of his fulfilled.' Rāma begged [illegible] etfulness of having been slain, and mother to life, with forg[illegible] nent; the return of his brothers to purification from all defile[illegible] for himself, invincibility in single their natural condition; and [illegible] All these did his father bestow. combat, and length of days.

[1] 'Vishnu Purāna,' note p. 401; and Muir, O. S. T., ii 447.

"It happened on one occasion that, during the absence of the Rishi's sons, the mighty monarch Kārttavīrya, the sovereign of the Haihaya tribe, endowed by the favour of Dattatreya with a thousand arms, and a golden chariot that went wheresoever he willed it to go, came to the hermitage of Jamadagni, where the wife of the sage received him with proper respect. But Kārttavīrya, by reason of his strength, had greatly oppressed the gods, Rishis, and all creatures. The gods and Rishis applied to Vishnu, who, with Indra, devised the means of destroying him. The king, inflated with the pride of valour, made no return for the hospitality of the Rishi's wife; but carried off with him the calf of the milch cow of the sacred oblation, and cast down the tall trees of the hermitage."

In the Rāmāyana is an account of the wonderful cow whose calf this king stole. When commanded by her owner, on the occasion of the visit of a king to the hermitage, to supply the varied wants of the great multitude which accompanied him,

"'The cow from whom all plenty flows,
Obedient to her saintly lord,
Viands to suit each taste outpoured.
Honey she gave, and roasted grain,
Mead sweet with flowers, and sugar-cane.
Each beverage of flavour rare,
And food of every sort, were there:
Hills of hot rice, and sweetened cakes,
And curdled milk, and soup in lakes.
Vast beakers flowing to the brim
With sugared drink prepared for him;
And dainty sweetmeats, deftly made,
Before the hermit's guests were laid.'

"When Rāma returned, his father told him what had happened; and seeing the cow in distress, he was filled with wrath. Taking up his splendid bow, he [illegible] and overthrew him in battle. With sharp [illegible] his thousand arms, and he perished.

[illegible]

[illegible] A Brāhman saint in whom a portion [illegible] incarnate.

[illegible] his death attacked the hermitage of Jamadagni when Rāma was absent, and slew the pious and unresisting sage, who called repeatedly, but fruitlessly, upon his valiant son. Rāma [illegible], laments his father's death, performs the last obsequies, and lights the funeral pile. He then made a vow that he would extirpate the whole Kshattriya race. In fulfilment of which he, with remorseless and fatal rage, singly destroyed the sons of Kārttavirya; and, after them, whatever Kshattriyas he encountered, Rāma slew. Thrice seven times * did he clear the earth of the Kshattriya caste. After he had cleared the world of Kshattriyas, their widows came to the Brāhmans, praying for offspring. The religious Brāhmans, free from any impulse of lust, cohabited with these women, who, in consequence, brought forth valiant Kshattriya boys and girls."

In another passage in the Mahābhārata it is taught that it was in consequence of the curse of a sage named Apava, that Rāma was able to kill Kārttavirya. The king had permitted Agni to devour the hermitage of this Rishi, who in revenge declared that his thousand arms should be cut off by Parasurāma.

In the Rāmāyana is an interesting legend in which Parasurāma, himself an incarnation of Vishnu, is described as meeting with Rāma Chandra, the following avatāra of this same deity, and in which the superiority of Rāma Chandra is declared.† "As King Dasaratha was returning to his capital with Rāma (Chandra), he was alarmed by the ill-omened sounds uttered by certain birds. The alarming event indicated was the arrival of Parasurāma. He was fearful to behold, brilliant as fire, and bore his [illegible] a bow on his shoulder. Being received with honour, [illegible] to say to Rāma, the son of Dasaratha, that he had [illegible] owess in breaking the bow produced by Janaka, [illegible] another which he asked Rāma to bend,

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[illegible] āma had to perform his work so many times [illegible] children were hidden from his rage amongst [illegible] grew up to be warriors. It was when his [illegible] d, and there was not a single Kshattriya [illegible] the Brāhmans, as noticed above.

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must, however, confine ourselves with the merest outline of his doings.

Mr. Griffiths, in the preface to his translation of the Rāmāyana, says: "The great exploit and main subject of the Epic is the war which Rāma waged with the giant Rāvan, the fierce and mighty King of Lanka or Ceylon, and the dread oppressor of gods, and nymphs, and saints and men." "The army," to borrow the words of Gorresio, "which Rāma led on this expedition was, as appears from the poem, gathered in great part from the region of the Vindhya hills;" but the races which he assembled are represented in the poem as monkeys, either out of contempt for their barbarism, or because at that time they were little known to the Sanskrit-speaking Hindus. The poet calls the people whom Rāma attacked Rākshasas. Rākshasas, according to the popular Indian belief, are malignant beings, demons of many shapes, terrible and cruel, who disturb the sacrifices and religious rites of the Brāhmans. It appears indubitable that the poet of the Rāmāyana applied the hated name of Rākshasas to an abhorred and hostile people, and that this denomination is here rather an expression of hatred and horror than a real historical name." The account of Rāma which follows is taken from the translation of the Rāmāyana in verse by Mr. Griffiths.

Dasaratha, the King of Ayodha, being childless, determined to make an asvamedh, or horse sacrifice, to obtain a son. It was necessary, in order to make an acceptable *asvamedh*, that the horse destined for sacrifice be allowed to wander at will for a whole year, as a sign that the authority of its owner was acknowledged by the neighbouring princes. The people loved their king, and during his reign were very prosperous; but one

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* It is a strange though real confirmation of the truth of the underlying history of the hero that to this day the aboriginal tribes inhabiting the Vindhya hills have many legends relating to the life of Rāma and Sītā, although they are not Hindus, and know but little of Hinduism. These people are not at all like the Hindus in appearance. They are black, have curly hair and thick lips, not at all unlike the more degraded of the Dravidian races.

for the want of a son, the happiness of king and subjects was incomplete. The sacrifice therefore was determined on, the place of sacrifice fixed, the horse set free, and the king being encouraged by the Brāhmans to proceed with the ceremony, the neighbouring princes were invited to attend and great preparations made. At length the sacrifice was completed, and the presiding Brāhman said to Dasaratha:

> "Four sons, O monarch, shall be thine,
> Upholders of the royal line."
> * * * *
> Another rite will I begin,
> Which shall the sons thou cravest win,
> When all things shall be duly sped
> And first Atharva texts be read." †

The gods were all assembled as the saint performed this rite, to whom he said:

> "For you has Dasaratha slain
> The votive steed, a son to gain;
> Stern penance rites the king has tried,
> And in firm faith on you relied.
> And now with undiminished care
> A second rite would now prepare.
> But, O ye gods, consent to grant
> The longing of your suppliant." ‡

The gods, pleased with the Brāhman's prayer, led by Indra, went to Brahmā, and poured forth in his ear their united petition, in which they mention the great work they wished done, as one of Dasaratha's sons, to perform:

> "O Brahmā, mighty by thy grace,
> Rāvan, who rules the giant race,
> Torments us in his senseless pride
> And penance-loving saints beside.
> For thou, well-pleased in days of old,
> Gavest the boon that makes him bold,
> That gods nor demons e'er should kill
> His charmed life, for so thy will.

* Griffith's 'Ramayana,' i. 31. † Ibid. i. 82. ‡ Ibid. i. 83.

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We, honouring that high behest,
Fear all his rage, though sore distrest.
That lord of giants, fierce and fell,
Scourges the earth, and heaven and hell.
Mad with thy boon, his impious rage
Smites saint and bard, and god and sage.
The sun himself withholds his glow,
The wind, in fear, forbears to blow;
The fire restrains his wonted heat
Where stands the dreaded Rāvan's feet,
And, necklaced with the wandering wave,
The sea before him fears to rave.
Kuvera's self, in sad defeat,
Is driven from his blissful seat.
We see, we feel, the giant's might,
And woe comes o'er us and affright.
To thee, O lord, thy suppliants pray
To find some cure this plague to stay."*

To this request Brahmā makes answer:

"One only way I find
To slay this fiend of evil mind.
He prayed me once his life to guard
From demon, god, and heavenly bard,
And spirits of the earth and air;
And I, consenting, heard his prayer.
But the proud giant, in his scorn,
Recked not of man of woman born.
None else may take his life away,
But only man the fiend may slay."†

Upon this Vishnu appears, is gladly welcomed by the assembled gods, and asks what request they have to make:

"King Dasaratha, thus cried they,
Fervent in penance many a day,
The sacrificial steed has slain.
Longing for sons, but all in vain.
Now, at the cry of us forlorn,
Incarnate as his seed be born.
Three queens has he; each lovely dame
Like Beauty, Modesty, or Fame.

* Griffiths's 'Rāmayana,' i. 83. † Ibid. i. 84.

"Divide thyself in four, and be
His offspring by these noble three;
Man's nature take, and slay in fight
Ravan, who laughs at heavenly might:
This common scourge, this rankling thorn,
Whom the three worlds too long have borne."*

Vishnu asks why he is necessary to effect their deliverance. Being told of Brahmā's promise to Rāvan, he consents to be born as man, and promises to slay the giant and his family.

Not long after this, a messenger comes from Vishnu, laden with a golden vase of nectar, which he gives to the king; at the same time telling him to give it to his queens, and assuring him that

"They the princely sons shall bear,
Long sought by sacrifice and prayer."†

To Queen Kausalya the king gave half the nectar, who through it became the mother of Rāma; the other half he gave to his other wives, who in consequence became mothers too,—Kaikeya bore Bharat, and Sumitra gave birth to Lakshman and Satrughna.

Before leaving heaven, Vishnu asked the gods, for whose benefit he was about to undertake this work, to assist him, and they did so

"Helps in war to lend him aid,
In forms that change at will arrayed;
Each god, each sage became a sire,
Each minstrel of the heavenly quire,
Each faun, of children strong and good."‡

The names of some of the leaders who assisted Rāma in answer to his prayer to the gods run as follows:—

"Bali, the woodland hosts who led,
High as Mahendra's lofty head,
Was Indra's child. That noblest fire,
The Sun, was great Sugriva's sire.

* Griffiths's "Rāmāyana" i. 85. † Ibid. i. 89. ‡ Ibid. i. 93.

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Tara, the mighty monkey, he
Was offspring of Vrihaspati:
Tara, the matchless chieftain, boast
For wisdom of the Vanar host.
Of Gandhamadan, brave and bold,
The father was the Lord of gold.
Nala the mighty, dear to fame,
Of skilful Visvakarma came.
From Agni, Nila bright as flame,
Who in his splendour, might, and worth,
Surpassed the sire who gave him birth.
The heavenly Asvins, swift and fair,
Were fathers of a noble pair,
Who, Dwivida and Mainda named,
For beauty like their sires were famed.
Varun was father of Sushen;
Of Sarabh, he who sends the rain [Parjanya].
Hanuman, best of monkey kind,
Was son of him who breathes the wind;
Like thunderbolt in frame was he,
And swift as Garud's self could flee.
These thousands did the gods create,
Endowed with might which none could mate,
In monkey forms that changed at will,
So strong their wish the fiend to kill."*

In due time the four sons of Dasaratha were born; and from infancy the strongest affection existed between Rāma the first-born and Lakshman, and between Bharat and Satrughna.

When Rāma was about sixteen years of age, a saint named Visvamitra came to Dasaratha's court, asking his assistance against two demons, named Maricha and Suvahu, who were commanded by Rāvana to annoy him, and prevent the completion of any sacrifice. At first the king pleaded the youthfulness of his son as an excuse for refusing to allow him to undertake a work so arduous; but at length his scruples were overcome, and Rāma with the faithful Lakshman set out for the hermitage. When the travellers reached the banks of the Sarju, the saint gave Rāma two spells which he was to employ whilst

* Griffith's "Rāmāyana," i. 93.

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baking, and which were so to affect him that he should have no equal in heaven or hell:

> "None in the world with thee shall vie,
> O sinless one, in apt reply,
> In knowledge, fortune, wit, and tact,
> Wisdom to plan, and skill to act." *

On their journey to the hermitage they visit various places of importance, and Visvamitra beguiles the time with numerous legends; he also bestows on Rāma various arms and powers. On reaching the end of their journey, for six days and nights they have to watch for the demons; when the sacrifice was about to end, these disturbers of the hermitage appear, and are conquered by Rāma, and their attendants by Lakshman. The saint, addressing Rāma, says:—

> "My joy, O prince, is now complete:
> Thou hast obeyed my will;
> Perfect before, this calm retreat
> Is now more perfect still." †

Next morning the hermits tell Rāma that King Janaka of Mithila ‡ has arranged for a sacrifice to which they are invited. Rāma is asked to accompany them, and is induced to do so by the mention of a wonderful bow in possession of the king, which no one was able to bend. The bow was a gift from Siva, as a reward for sacrifice. On the way to Mithila they pass through a grove, in which, unseen by gods and men, Ahalyā, the wife of Gautama the sage, had been undergoing penance for countless ages on account of her adultery with Indra. Though the god came to her in the form of her husband, she saw through his disguise, yet did not resist his overtures. Her husband condemned her to live unknown in the forest until Rāma should liberate her. Her hour of release had now come;—Rāma sees her, touches her feet, and the curse being at an end, her husband receives her back.

* Griffiths's Rāmāyana, i. 125. † Ibid. i. 156. ‡ Tirhoot.

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In due time they reach Mithila. The princes are introduced to the king, who gives them a hearty welcome, and narrates the history of the world-famed bow they have come to see. He tells them it was the bow with which Siva, when angry at not being invited to Daksha's sacrifice, wrought such havoc amongst the assembled gods. It was held by successive monarchs of his line as a mark of sovereignty, and as a means of defence against their foes.

"This gem of bows,
That freed the God of gods from woes,
Stored by our great forefathers, lay
A treasure and a pride for aye."*

One day, as Janaka was ploughing, an infant sprang from the ground whom he named Sita (a furrow), on account of her secret birth. In the 'Uttara Kānda'† is a legend, the object of which is to show that Sita is another form of Lakshmi, and that it was she who wished to accomplish the death of Rāvana. "Rāvana in the course of his wanderings comes to the Himālayas, where he meets with a young woman of marvellous beauty, named Vedāvati, dressed in ascetic garments, and living the life of a devotee. He speaks of love; but she indignantly rejects his overtures, saying that it was her father's wish she should wed Vishnu, and that she had wed him with her heart. Rāvana presses his suit, assuring her that he is superior to Vishnu. She says that none but he would contemn that deity. Rāvana replies by touching her hair. Being very indignant at this, she declares that she will enter the fire (die) before his eyes. Before doing so, she says, 'Since I have been insulted in the forest by thee, who art wicked-hearted, I shall be born again for thy destruction. For a man of evil design cannot be slain by a woman; and the merit of my austerity would be lost if I were to launch a curse against you. But if I have performed, or bestowed, or sacrificed aught, may I be born a virtuous daughter—not produced from the womb—of a righteous man.' She then entered the blazing fire. It was she who was born as the daughter of King Janaka

* Griffiths's 'Rāmāyana,' i. 278. † Muir, O. S. T., iv. 417.

The mountain-like enemy (Rāvana), who was virtually destroyed before by her wrath, has now been destroyed by her, after she had associated herself with Vishnu's superhuman energy."

Regarding the child thus mysteriously found to be other than of mortal birth, to all suitors for her hand Janaka gave one reply:

> "I give not this my daughter; she
> Prize of heroic worth shall be." *

She was to be the wife of him who could bend the wonder-working bow. Many of the neighbouring princes had tried, but failed. And now Janaka says:

> "This heavenly bow, exceeding bright,
> These youths shall see, O anchorite.
> Then if young Rāma's hand can string
> The bow that baffled lord and king,
> To him I give, as I have sworn,
> My Sita, not of woman born." †

The bow is brought, and Rāma is invited to try his strength. He takes it up easily in his hand, and as he was drawing the string, it snapped in two, to the wonder and fright of the beholders. Rāma thus becomes the successful suitor of Sita, and messengers are despatched to invite his father to the wedding. His two brothers also come; and not only Rāma and Sita are united, but his three brothers are wedded to three daughters of Janaka. They then return home and live in happiness and prosperity.

After a time King Dasaratha wishes to abdicate in favour of Rāma his firstborn. When he had fixed upon a suitable time, the old man sends for his son, and enjoins him to prepare himself for the great event, by passing the night in holy exercises. When the people hear of the king's intention, they are delighted; the city is illuminated, and they spend the night in festivities. In the meantime a servant goes to Kaikeya, the mother of Bharata, and succeeds in exciting her jealousy of Rāma to such

* Griffiths's 'Rāmāyana,' i. 279. † Ibid, i. 280.

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an extent, that she retires to the room of discontent and there mourns her lot. The king visits her, when she says to him:

"Now pledge thy word, if thou incline
To listen to this prayer of mine."*

Ignorant of what her petition is, the king foolishly promises to grant it, before it is expressed. She, calling the gods to witness the promise and oath of her husband, reminds him that on an occasion of great danger she alone had stood by him, and that he then promised her a boon. She now requested the fulfilment of that vow; or,

"If thou refuse thy promise sworn,
I die despised before the morn,"†

and concludes her address by asking that her son be installed as Prince Regent, and Rāma be sent to live a hermit's life in the forest for fourteen years.

The king is almost mad with grief at this request, but, being bound by word and oath, is compelled to comply. The city is in tears that but yesterday was bright with joy; and the ceremony that was arranged for Rāma is performed in favour of Bharata, much against his will. Rāma tried to persuade Sita to allow him to proceed to the forest alone; but to this she will not for a moment consent. The interview between them on this occasion is one of the most beautiful and touching incidents in the whole story. She despises difficulties and dangers and discomforts, if she is with her husband; and avers that death would be preferable to separation. Lakshman's entreaty to accompany them is very touching too:

"I heed not homes of god on high,
I heed not life that cannot die;
Nor would I wish, with thee away,
O'er the three worlds to stretch my sway."‡

At length Rāma, Sita, and Lakshman depart amid the tears of the whole city. When they reach the forest they seek a quiet spot and settle down at last at Chi[illegible]

* Griffith's 'Rāmāyana,' I. 322. † Ibid., I. 325.

Dasaratha dies of grief a short time after their departure, and the city is again flooded with tears. Bharata seeks the exiles, with the intention of bringing Rāma home to occupy the throne, but to this Rāma will not consent. Bharata therefore continues to rule in Rāma's stead, whom he always regards as the rightful king, and takes with him a pair of Rāma's shoes, which are exposed to view on state occasions, to indicate that Bharata is acting only as Viceroy.

The three meet with many adventures in the forest, as they live the life of ascetics. One day they see an immense giant, named Viradha, clothed in a tiger's skin, and

> "Three lions, tigers four, ten deer,
> He carried on his iron spear."*

This giant, taking Sita aside, threatens to kill and eat her; but after a time, changing his mind, proposes to keep her; and, thinking that he is acting generously towards Rāma, offers to allow him to go off unharmed. At length they fight; but as the giant is proof against their weapons, he takes up Rāma and Lakshman upon his shoulders, and runs away with them; from which position, they each succeed in cutting off one of his arms; when the giant falls, weak from loss of blood; and seeing that their weapons cannot deprive him of life, they bury him alive. After this adventure, they reach a hermitage; and Rāma becomes the protector of hermits throughout the district.

When ten years of his forest life was past, Rāma sets off for the hermitage of Agastya, a man who had gained great merit by his austerities, where they build a cottage, but are not able to live in peace long. As Rāma and Sita are sitting together under a tree, a giantess named Surpanakhā, the sister of Rāvan, passes by, and becomes madly in love with Rāma.

> "She, grim of eye and foul of face,
> Loved his sweet glance and forehead's grace;

* Griffith's: Rāmayana, iii. 5.

She of unlovely figure, him
Of stately form and shapely limb;
She whose dim locks disordered hung,
Him whose bright hair on high brows clung."*

The giantess questions Rāma as to the reason of his being in the forest; he gives her a full account of himself and Sita, and then inquires who she may be. She says she is Rāvan's sister, and openly avows her love:

"This poor misshapen Sita leave,
And me, thy worthier bride, receive.
Look on my beauty, and prefer
A spouse more meet than one like her;
I'll eat that ill-formed woman there;
Thy brother, too, her fate shall share.
But come, beloved, thou shalt roam
With me through all our woodland home."†

Rāma, smiling, told her that as he was married he could not accept her kind offer, but advised her to try his brother. She acts upon this advice; but Lakshman sends her back to Rāma. Thinking that Sita was the chief obstacle to the attainment of her wishes, she was about to slay her; Rāma prevented her from doing this, and Lakshman cut off her nose and ears. She then fled to her brother Khara, whose anger she roused by the tale of her mutilation, who sent fourteen giants, giving them strict orders to kill Rāma, Sita, and Lakshman. These are quickly slain by Rāma. Khara is terribly angry as he hears of the death of his giants; and, quickly raising an army of 14,000 warriors, goes against his foes. Rāma, single-handed, destroyed them nearly all.

One of these giants, named Akampan, rushed off to inform Rāvan of the catastrophe. Rāvan, intensely angry, asks:

"Who is the wretch shall vainly try
In earth, heaven, hell from me to fly?
Vaisravan, Indra, Vishnu, He
Who rules the dead, must reverence me;

* Griffiths's 'Rāmāyana,' iii. 80.

† Ibid., iii. 82.

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> For not the mighty's lord of those
> Can brave my will, and live at ease;
> With unresisted influence, I
> Can force e'en Death himself to die."*

He then asks particulars of the fight, and determines to go himself and avenge his sister. The messenger informs him that it is useless for him to attempt to conquer Rāma by force, and advises him rather to carry off Sita; for,

> "Reft of his darling wife, be sure
> Brief days the mourner will endure."†

Rāvan orders his chariot, starts off alone to Maricha, and asks his assistance, who dissuades him from attempting to fight with Rāma; but soon afterwards Suparnakha, with her mutilated face, arrives at Lanka, and, appearing before Rāvan, again arouses his indignation. As he sat on his throne he is thus described:—

> "A score of arms, ten necks, had he,
> His royal gear was brave to see;
> His stature like a mountain height,
> His arms were strong, his teeth were white.
>
> * * *
>
> "Ten thousand years the giant spent
> On dire austerities intent;
> And of his heads an offering, laid
> Before the Self-existent, made."‡

The giantess retells her tale, which excites her brother's anger afresh. He immediately sets forth again for the hermitage of the fiend Maricha, and asks him to assist him in his exploit by assuming the form of a golden deer with silver spots, by which Sita's attention would be attracted.

> "Doubt not the lady, when she sees
> The wondrous deer among the trees,
> Will bid her lord and Lakshman take
> The creature for its beauty's sake."

* Griffith's 'Rāmāyana,' iii. 143. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid. iii. 148.

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Maricha, remembering the power of Rāma when as a mere boy he went to assist the hermit Visvamitra, and how he him-

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self was wounded by him, again tries to dissuade Rāvan. But this time he cannot prevail, and there is not much choice left him, for Rāvan declares:

> "Thy life, if thou the task essay,
> In jeopardy may stand;
> Oppose me, and this very day
> Thou diest by this hand."*

* Griffiths's 'Rāmāyana,' iii. 185.

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Mārīcha assumes the form of a deer, and, proceeding to the vicinity of the hermitage, attracts the attention of Sita, who becomes anxious to possess it. Rāma, leaving Lakshman to guard the home, goes in pursuit, and shoots it. As the fiend was dying, assuming Rāma's voice, he cried out loudly enough to be heard by his wife and brother, "Ho, Sita! Ho, Lakshman!" They imagining that some evil had come to Rāma, Lakshman hurried towards the spot whence the cry proceeded; whilst Rāvan, who was waiting near, seized the opportunity to carry off the defenceless Sita. The demon did his best to induce her to yield herself an easy prey; but though she struggled hard, and cried for help to all who came near, none were able to deliver her. Held in his magical car, they reached Lanka, where she was placed in one of Rāvan's palaces. He tried both by kind words and fearful threatenings to win her love; but kindness and cruelty were equally ineffective. To comfort her, Brahmā sent Indra, who managed to elude the vigilance of her guards, and assured her of the sympathy of the gods, and of the fact that all would yet be well with her husband and herself.

Whilst this was happening at Lanka, Rāma was almost mad with grief. When Lakshman came to him after the deer was slain, he feared some great evil had happened; and on their return to the cottage, as Sita was not to be found, his anguish was intolerable. He wandered about calling upon the trees, mountains, and rivers to tell him what had happened to his loved one; but they were silent as the grave. A vulture at the point of death, who had fought with Rāvan on Sita's behalf, informs him of her capture by the great fiend. (See Part III. chap. vii.)

In their wanderings, the brothers meet with a giant named Kabandha, who, owing to a curse, had to wear the hideous form in which he now appeared, until Rāma should cut off his arms. As he was running away with the brothers, they fulfilled this condition of the curse, as there was no other way of escape for them; but on learning who they were, he was delighted, and asked them to burn his body in order that he might regain his proper form and ascend to heaven. As they committed him to the flames, he assumed a heavenly shape, and, when in the air, told them where

Sita was taken, and advised them to seek the help of Sugriva, the king of the vānar* (Monkey) tribes, as only through his aid could they recover her. Acting upon this advice, they proceed to Pampa, Sugriva's home; where the sight of the beauty of the lake causes Rāma's lamentations to burst forth afresh:

> "By sights like these of joy and peace,
> My pangs of hopeless love increase."†

When Sugriva saw the brothers, imagining them to be friends of his brother Bāli, by whom he had been deprived of his throne, he was greatly alarmed, and sent Hanumān to learn who they were, and why they had come. When Hanumān learns the object of their visit, knowing they would assist his master to regain his kingdom, he promises Sugriva's help, and, taking them upon his shoulders, hurries off with them into the presence of the Vānar king. A league is made immediately, and after Rāma had promised that the usurper Bāli should fall that day, Sugriva says of Sita:

> "Yea, though in heaven the lady dwell,
> Or prisoned in the depths of hell,
> My friendly care her way shall track,
> And bring thy ransomed darling back."‡

Sugriva produces a robe, bracelets, and anklets that fell from Sita as she was being carried off by Rāvan; the anklets

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* Siva had foretold that Rāma would obtain the aid of the monkeys for the destruction of Rāvan when the demon was travelling in the Himālayas. Siva appeared to him as a dwarf, and tried to prevent him from travelling along a certain road. Rāvan disregarded the prohibition, and contemptuously asked who Siva was, to give an order that no one should pass that way; he also ridiculed the monkey-like appearance of the dwarf. Nandeshwara (Siva) replied, that monkeys in appearance and power would be produced to destroy Rāvan and his family. In order to show his power, Rāvan raised the mountain in his arms; but Siva pressed it down with his toe, and crushed Rāvan in his arms, until he cried out with pain, and not until he had propitiated Siva for a thousand years did he release him; and when he released him, he said that his name should be Rāvan, from the cry (Rāva) which he uttered.

† Griffith's 'Rāmāyana,' iv. 6. ‡ Ibid. iv. 37.

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Rāma recognises as having belonged to his wife, and is greatly comforted as Sugriva tells him that though at present unable to inform him where Sita has been taken, he will certainly be able to obtain this information, and assist him in his attempt to rescue her. Sugriva then narrates the story of his quarrel with his brother Bāli, but, ere he believes that Rāma can materially assist him, tests the wonderful bow of the hero; and was greatly astonished as he saw an arrow Rāma discharged pierce through seven palm-trees in line, pass through a hill behind them, and, after traversing six subterranean worlds, return to the quiver. The Vānar king, seeing he has no common ally, goes forth fearlessly against his brother; and in the fight, when Sugriva was getting worsted, Rāma sends an arrow which slays Bali. This was regarded by the dying man as an act of gross injustice, because Rāma slew him without informing him who he was; had this been done, he would gladly have assisted him in his quest for Sita.

Sugriva, on the fall of his brother, re-ascends the throne, but is so fully occupied with the pleasures of his position as to forget the promise of help he had given Rāma, by whose prowess his dominion had been regained, until Hanuman, ever faithful to Rāma's cause, reminds him:

> "The realm is won, thy name advanced,
> The glory of thy house enhanced;
> And now thy foremost care should be
> To aid the friends who succoured thee."[1]

But this reminder of his duty is insufficient to arouse the king from his selfish enjoyment; it was not until Rāma sends a strong message by Lakshman that he is fully alive to his duty. When, however, he does move, it is to collect a mighty army. Of the troops collected for this enterprise it is said:

> "Thousands, yea, millions, shall there be
> Obedient to their king's decree.
> * * * *

[1] Griffith's 'Rāmayana,' iv. 149.

"Fierce bears and monkey troops combined,
An army of every varied kind,
Terrible in their forms, who dwell
In grove and wood and bosky dell." *

The king, when his vast army was collected, gave instructions to each leader of a division, as to the limits of the district he was to search for the lost princess; but as Rāvan was believed to have gone towards the south, Hanumān's district, special instruction was given to him; and Rāma entrusted him with a ring that, if successful in discovering Sita, he could show as a proof that he was a messenger from her husband. For a long time the search was fruitless, and would have been given up as hopeless, but for Hanumān's encouragement to persevere; when fortunately they meet with the vulture Sampati, brother of Jatayus, whom Rāvan slew as he attempted to prevent him from carrying off Sita, and who was the first to put Rāma on the right track for obtaining his wife. This Sampati, hearing that Rāvan had slain his brother, was most anxious to avenge his death, and willingly rendered all the assistance he could. He informs the seekers that Sita is at Lanka.

"A hundred leagues your course must be,
Beyond this margin of the sea;
Still to the south your way pursue,
And there the giant Rāvan view." †

But here a difficulty occurred: there was a hundred leagues of water to be crossed; who could make such a leap? Hanuman again comes to the front and declares:

"Swift as a shaft from Rāma's bow,
To Rāvan's city I will go." ‡

According to his promise, Hanumān made this marvellous flying, and, after meeting with various adventures, reaches Lanka, diminishes in size until he is no bigger than a cat, passes through the city unnoticed, and finally reaches the Asoka grove where Sita was confined, just in time to witness an unsuccessful

* Gaspitas's 'Rāmayana,' iv. 168. † Ibid. iv. 254. ‡ Ibid. iv. 280.

attempt of Rāvan to induce his lovely captive to forget her husband, and become the bride of her captor. Rāvan's parting words to Sita on this occasion were not very love-inspiring; he declared that unless within two months she consented to become his bride,

> "My cooks shall mince thy limbs with steel,
> And serve thee for my morning meal."*

When she is alone, Hanumān addresses her. At first, on hearing a monkey speak, she imagines herself dreaming; but the sight of her husband's ring convinces her that the strange messenger is a friend, and she is delighted to hear all he has to tell:

> "'Thou bringest me,' she cried again,
> 'A mingled draught of bliss and pain:
> Bliss that he wears me in his heart,
> Pain that he wakes and weeps apart.'"†

Though Hanumān had found Sita, and offered to carry her on his shoulders to her long-lost husband, a difficulty arose; she feared that in rising to the height which so long a leap necessitated she might be giddy, and feel it to be necessary to lay hold of him; but of her own free will she would on no account whatever so much as touch the limbs of living man except those of her husband. Instead, then, of availing herself of the monkey's offer, she prefers to remain where she is for the present, and simply sends back a kind message to Rāma, with a gem to assure him that she has received his. Hanumān does not care to return without having effected some injury on his foe; he therefore destroys the grove and a temple, and slays several of Rāvan's heroes. At length he is made captive. When taken before Rāvana, he confesses that he is a messenger from Rāma to Sita, and earnestly advises her restoration. This so exasperates the giant that he would have slain him but for the fact that an envoy's life is sacred. Some of Rāvan's people, however, set fire to his tail, from which he does not experience any pain, but manages to set fire to the city in several places.

* Griffith's 'Rāmayana,' iv. 334. † Ibid. iv. 361.

When Hanumān had completed his work in Lanka, he made a [illegible] leap to India, placed Sita's gem in Rāma's hand, and told him all that had transpired in Rāvan's capital. The prince was delighted as he heard of his wife's constancy; but as the difficulty of transferring an army from the mainland over a hundred leagues of sea seemed impossible to surmount, he was almost in despair of seeing her again. Sugriva, more practical and fuller of resource, says:

> "Thy task must be
> To cast a bridge across the sea,
> The city of our foe to reach,
> That crowns the mountain by the beach;
> And when our feet that isle shall tread,
> Rejoice and deem thy foeman dead."*

The army, which had remained some distance away, now marches to the sea-shore, and Rāma is very curious to learn by what means so vast a bridge can be built. He in his anguish calls upon the sea to withdraw and allow his followers to march across as on dry land; but although the Ocean will not grant this prayer, he does assist with his advice, as he tells him to enlist the services of a tribe of Dasyas (servants), who, together with the monkey host, construct a bridge in five days. No sooner is this completed than the troops march across, Rāma being carried by Hanumān, and Lakshman by Angad; and though Rāvan hears of their approach, and the spies he sends, terrified at the appearance of the invading army, counsel him to yield, he obstinately refuses, and at last the attack upon his city is made.

After fierce fighting, with considerable loss on both sides, Rāma and Lakshman are dangerously wounded by Indrajit, a son of Rāvan; but on some wonderful herbs being applied to them by Garuda, the marvellous bird of Vishnu, they are restored. A second time they fall, and are again restored by herbs which Hanumān fetched in an incredibly short space of time from the Himālayas. At last Rāma and Rāvan meet face

* Griffiths's 'Rāmāyana,' v. 3.

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to face when Rāma's destructive arrows seem to have met with a foe as wonderful as themselves:

"Straight to its mark the arrow sprang,
And from the giant's body shred,
With trenchant steel, the monstrous head.
There might the triple world behold
The severed head adorned with gold.
But when all eyes were bent to view,
Swift in its stead another grew."*

Acting on the advice of Mātali, Rāma, tired of this fruitless toil, launched an arrow "whose fire was kindled by the Almighty Sire," which pierced the giant's heart and laid him dead at his feet, whereupon Hanumān is sent to assure Sita of the death of her captor, and in a few hours she is sent carefully in a litter by Vibhishan, the brother and successor of Rāvan. This litter Rāma causes to be opened, that the Vānars may see his wife's face, as he says:

"A woman's guard is not her bower,
The lofty wall, the fenced tower:
Her conduct is her best defence,
And not a king's magnificence."†

This speech struck terror in the hearts of all around, and Sita especially is almost heartbroken as, instead of the warm and loving welcome she had anticipated, he coolly tells her:

"Lady, at length my task is done,
And thou, the prize of war, art won.
* * * *
"If from my home my queen was reft,
This arm hath well avenged the theft;
And in the field has wiped away
The blot that on my honour lay.
* * * *
"But, lady, 'twas not love for thee
That led mine army o'er the sea.
* * * *
"I battled to avenge the cause
Of honour and insulted laws.

* Griffith's 'Ramayana,' v. 254. † Ibid. v. 271.

My love is next, for on thy face
Lies the dark blot of sin and shame;
And thou art hateful as the light
That flashes on the injured sight.
The world is all before thee: flee:
Go where thou wilt, but not with me.

* * *

"For Râvan bore thee through the sky,
And fixed on thine his evil eye;
About thy waist his arms he threw,
Close to his breast his captive drew;
And kept thee, vassal of his power,
An inmate of his ladies' bower."*

Hearing these cruel and unexpected words, Sita makes a most pathetic appeal, in which she vehemently asserts her innocence; but as there are no signs of relenting in her husband, she wishes to die, or to prove her innocence by the fire-ordeal, and asks Lakshman to prepare a funeral pile.

"I will not live to bear this weight
Of shame, forlorn, and desolate.
The kindled fire my woes shall end,
And be my best and surest friend."†

Lakshman performs this sad office; and when all is ready, she walks round it, and before entering the fire, addresses Agni:

"As this fond heart, by virtue swayed,
From Raghu's son has never strayed,
So universal witness, Fire,
Protect my body on the pyre.
As Raghu's son has idly laid
This charge on Sita, hear and aid."‡

Having made this appeal to Agni to proclaim her innocence, she enters the fire. The gods, at once descending from heaven in their glory, address Râma, saying:

"Couldst thou, the Lord of all, couldst thou,
Creator of the worlds, allow

* Griffith's 'Râmâyana,' v. 273. † Ibid. v. 276. ‡ Ibid. v. 277.

"Thy queen, thy spouse to brave the fire,
And give her body to the pyre?
Dost thou not yet, Supremely Wise,
Thy heavenly nature recognise?"*

Rāma frankly confesses that he believes himself to be only a mortal: Brahmā tries to enlighten him, as he assures him that he is Vishnu incarnate for the purpose of slaying Rāvan, and that Sītā, whom his cruel conduct had driven into the fire, was no other than Lakshmi, his celestial spouse. In confirmation of this, Agni appears in the fire, and, taking Sītā by the hand, conducts her to her husband, and declares her to be pure and spotless. Rāma receives her with the greatest joy, and states that he was certain of her innocence all along, but that as others might have doubted her, he had caused her to pass through this ordeal.

Dasaratha, the father of Rāma, now descends from heaven, and tells him that even in that happy place he had been sad to witness the sorrows of his beloved son. Indra next appears, and, at Rāma's request, brings back to life the many Vānars who had perished in his cause; and then other gods thank Rāma for the relief he has given them by the death of Rāvan. When these congratulations are over, Rāma, Sītā, and Lakshman mount a magic car, lent him by Vibhishan, in which in a single day they travel from Lanka to his own city. On arriving near it, Hanuman is sent to inform Bharat of their return; and the joy this intelligence gives to the faithful Bharat, who has continued to reign as viceroy and not as king, and to the citizens generally, is indescribable. Rāma quickly assumes his position as king, and the people enjoy unexampled prosperity:

"Ten thousand years Ayodha blest
With Rama's rule, had peace and rest,
No widow mourned her murdered mate,
No house was ever desolate.
The happy land no murrain knew,
The flocks and herds increased and grew,

* Griffith's 'Ramayana,' v. 278.

The earth her kindly fruits supplied,
No harvest failed, no children died
Unknown were want, disease, and crime;
So calm, so happy was the time."*

This state of universal happiness does not continue for ever. People in the city have doubts regarding the purity of their queen, which at length reach the ears of Rāma, who, taking advantage of a wish of Sita to see once again a hermitage, sends her to live an ascetic life. When her twin sons born there come of age, she sends them to their father's court, who, on seeing them, deeply feels the injustice he had done their mother, and determines at any cost to reinstate her as his queen. On her arrival he asks her to assert her innocence before the assembled court; but even Sita could not bear this. She calls to the earth which gave her birth to give her a home; the earth opened her arms, and received her into her bosom. Rāma after this grows tired of life, when Time visits him and informs him that his work is done. Hearing this, the good king goes to the banks of the sacred stream, whence, forsaking his body, he ascends to his home in heaven.

Rāma, to a vast number of Hindus, is not merely the King of Ayodha, whose history is so pathetically told in the Rāmāyana, nor the Benefactor of Gods, as he slew their enemy, Rāvan; he is their Saviour and Friend. As the dead are carried to the river-side to be burned, the friends repeatedly cry: "Rām Rāma, Satya Nāma;" *i.e.*, "Rāma Rāma, the true name." Probably this is owing to the fact that in his life his power of intercession for the dead was great; whilst his kindness to and care for his followers were such as to encourage men to trust in him. He is said to have taken the whole of the inhabitants of his beloved city Ayodha to Brahmā's heaven without their suffering death. At his intercession Rāvan's spies were saved; and the Vānar hosts that had fallen were restored to life. He entreated his father Dasaratha to remove the curse which he had pronounced upon Kaikeya, the mother of Bharata, through whose unkindness Rāma had been exiled.

* Griffiths's Ramayana, i. 314.

8. THE KRISHNA AVATARA.

Professor Goldstücker says * that this "is the most interesting incarnation of Vishnu, both on account of the opportunity which it affords to trace in Hindu antiquity the gradual transformation of mortal heroes into representatives of a god; and on account

THE KRISHNA AVATARA.

of the numerous legends connected with it, as well as the influence which it exercised on the Vaishnava cult. In the Mahábhárata, Krishna—which literally means 'the black or dark one'—is sometimes represented as rendering homage to Siva,

* Chambers's Cyclopædia, s. v.

and therefore acknowledging his own inferiority to that deity, or as recommending the worship of Uma, the consort of Siva, and as receiving boons from both these deities. In some passages, again, he bears merely the character of a hero endowed with extraordinary powers, and in others his divine nature is even disputed or denied by adversaries, though they are eventually punished for this unbelief. As the intimate ally of Arjuna, he claims the rank of the supreme deity; but there are other passages, again, in the Mahābhārata in which the same claim of Siva is admitted, and an attempt is made at compromising their rival claims, by declaring both deities one and the same. Sometimes, moreover, Krishna is in this Epos declared to represent merely a very small portion—'a portion of a portion,' as it is called—of the divine essence of Vishnu. In the Mahābhārata, therefore, which is silent also regarding many adventures in Krishna's life fully detailed in the Purānas, the worship of Vishnu in this incarnation was by no means so generally admitted or settled as it is in many Purānas of the Vaishnait Sect; nor was there at that period that consistency in the conception of a Krishna Avatāra, which is traceable in the later works."

In the 'Prem Sāgar,' the Hindi version of the 'Bhāgavata Purāna,' is the following account of the object of this incarnation. A king of Mathura, named Ugrasena, had a beautiful wife, who was barren. One day, when walking in a wood, she lost her companions; and when alone, a demon becoming enamoured of her assumed her husband's form, and as a result a son was born, who was named Kansa. When a mere child Kansa manifested a most cruel disposition—his great delight being to catch and kill children—and he grew up to be a source of sorrow to his father, family, and country. He advised his father to give up the worship of Rāma, the god of his race, and to call in secret only on Mahādeva (Siva). His father replied with sorrow: 'Rama is my lord, and the dispeller of my grief: if I do not worship him, how shall I as a sinful man cross over the sea of the world?' Kansa hearing this dethroned his father, and having usurped his place issued a proclamation throughout his dominions forbidding

ment to worship Kāma, and commanding them to reverence Śiva; and his tyranny at length became so unbearable, that the earth, assuming the form of a cow, went to Indra and, complaining of all this, said: "Evil spirits have begun to commit great crimes in the world; in dread of whom Religion and Justice have departed; and if you will permit me, I, too, will abandon the world, and descend into the lower regions." Indra hearing this went in company with the other gods to Brahmā, to see what redress could be afforded. Brahmā conducted them to Śiva, who, in his turn, conducted them to Vishnu; and reminding him of the deliverance he had afforded to gods and men in his previous manifestations, they induce him again to become a man for the destruction of Kansa. The gods and goddesses, delighted at this assurance of help, promise also to forsake their heavenly homes that they may be his companions during his earthly sojourn; and Vishnu himself arranges that Lakshman, who in the Rāma incarnation had been his brother and constant and most faithful companion, and Bharata also and Sutraghna, should accompany him; and that Śrī, under the name of Rukmini, should be his wife.

The 'Vishnu Purāna,'* from which most of the following legends are taken, gives a somewhat different account of Vishnu's reply. Krishna was the incarnation of "a part of a part of the supreme being." When entreated to become incarnate, "the supreme Lord plucked off two hairs, one white and one black, and said to the gods, 'These my hairs shall descend upon the earth, and shall relieve her of the burden of her distress!'" The white hair was impersonated as Balarāma, and the black as Krishna. "The Asuras shall all be destroyed. This my black hair shall be impersonated in the eighth conception of Devaki, the wife of Vasudeva, who is like a goddess, and shall slay Kansa, who is the demon Kālanemi."†

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* Book v.

† It should be noticed here that a commentator says on this passage that the statement that two hairs of Vishnu became incarnate must not be taken literally, but that the work to be done by him on this occasion was so small that it could easily have been effected by two hairs. In Krishna, Vishnu himself was manifested.

While Vasudeva and his wife Devaki were being driven by King Kansa in a chariot, "a voice in the sky, sounding loud and deep like thunder, addressing Kansa, said, 'Fool that you are, the eighth child of the damsel you are now driving shall take away your life!'" Kansa hearing this drew his sword, and was about to slay Devaki; but Vasudeva interposed, saying, "Kill not Devaki, great warrior! Spare her life, and I will deliver to you every child she may bring forth." Kansa, being appeased with this promise, spared the lady but to prevent any mistake placed a guard by day and night over their apartments; and as child after child was born, it was given up to him and slain.

Kansa was under the impression that he had destroyed Devaki's children, but this was not the case; these children were really others (children of Hiranyakasipu, whom Vishnu slew as the Man-Lion), brought from the nether regions at Vishnu's command by Yoganiudra, "the great illusory energy of Vishnu," and lodged in Devaki's womb in order that the cruel Kansa might be overreached. Vishnu said to this goddess: "Go, Nishá (Sleep), to the nether regions, and by my command conduct successively six of their princes to be conceived by Devaki. When these shall have been put to death by Kansa, the seventh conception shall be formed of a portion of Sesha (the serpent-deity), who is part of me; and this you shall transfer before the time of birth to Rohini, another wife of Vasudeva, who resides at Gokula." This child was Balarama. "The report shall run that Devaki miscarries. I will myself become incarnate in her eighth conception; and you shall take a similar character as the embryo offspring of Yasodá (wife of a herdsman named Nanda). In the night of the eighth of the dark half of the month Nabhas I shall be born; and you will be born on the ninth. Impelled and aided by my power, Vasudeva shall bear me to the bed of Yasodá, and you to the bed of Devaki. Kansa shall take you and hold you up to dash you against a stone; but you shall escape into the sky, where Indra shall meet and do homage to you through reverence of me."

When Devaki gives birth to her eighth son, Vasudeva takes the child, and, eluding the vigilance of the guards, hurries

through the air with the serpent Sesha following. On reaching the river Yamuna, which he has to cross, though ordinarily it was both wide and deep, it assists him in his flight, the water only rising to his knees. Just as he reaches Nanda's house, Yasodā had given birth to her child, which Vasudeva seizes, and leaving Devaki's child in its place, returns to his prison home, and manages to re-enter unobserved. Soon after this the cry of the new-born child being heard by the guard, Kansa is quickly informed of its birth, and, rushing into the room, seized and dashed it against a stone. But fate was too strong for him. Immediately the child touched the ground, "it rose into the sky, and, expanding into a gigantic figure, having eight arms, each wielding some formidable weapon, laughed and said to Kansa, 'What avails it thee to have hurled me to the ground? He is born that shall kill thee, the mighty one amongst the gods, who was formerly thy destroyer.'" The reference of the last sentence as taught by other Purānas is to the fact that Kansa was no other than Kālanemi, whom Vishnu had slain when incarnate as Rāma.

Greatly alarmed by the unexpected frustration of his plans, Kansa collects his friends, and, addressing them, said: "The vile and contemptible denizens of heaven are assiduously plotting against my life: they dreading my prowess, I hold them of no account. Have I not seen the king of the gods when he had ventured into the conflict, receiving my shafts upon his back, and not bravely upon his breast? Now, it is my determination to inflict still deeper degradation upon these evil-minded and unprincipled gods. Let therefore every man who is notorious for liberality (in gifts to gods and Brāhmans), every man who is remarkable for his celebration of sacrifices, be put to death; that thus the gods shall be deprived of the means by which they subsist. The goddess who has been born as the infant child of Devaki has announced to me that he is again alive who in a former being was my death. Let therefore active search be made for whatever young children there may be upon earth, and let every boy in whom there are signs of increased vigour be slain without remorse." Soon after this, as

he cared nothing more from them, he released Vasudeva and Devaki from their confinement, and, in dread of meeting his great enemy, withdrew into the inner apartments of his house.

On regaining his liberty, Vasudeva speedily sought out Nanda, who of course was unaware of the change of children effected by Vasudeva, and, after congratulating him on the birth of a son, suggested the advisability of his returning home, as having paid his taxes, there was nothing to detain him in the city. He feared lest the spies of Kansa should notice the peculiar excellences of the child, and destroy him according to Kansa's order. At the same time he brought his other child by Rohini (Balarāma), and placed him under the care of Nanda to be brought up as his own child. By this means, as Rāma and Lakshman were inseparable companions in the previous incarnation, Krishna and Balarāma were as intimately connected in this.

The herdsman Nanda and his family had not been long settled at Gokula before efforts were made to destroy the infant Krishna. A female fiend named Putanā, the sucking of whose breast was instant death to an infant, came by night, and, taking the child in her arms, offered him her breast. Krishna seized it with both hands, and sucked with such violence that the hideous being roared with pain, and giving way in every limb fell down dead. The villagers hearing the shrieks rushed to the house to see what was the matter. Yasodā waved a cow's tail brush over him, whilst Nanda put dried cow-dung upon his head, and, placing an amulet on his arm, besought Vishnu to protect the child.

There are many legends connected with his boyhood, which show his extraordinary power. On one occasion, when a mere infant, lying under Nanda's wagon, he cried for the breast, and being impatient because his mother did not come quickly, upset the wagon over, to the great astonishment of the by-standers. He and Balarāma played with and tormented the calves to such an extent, that Yasodā became quite angry, and to prevent its repetition tied Krishna to a heavy wooden mortar with which corn is threshed, and went on with her work. Krishna,

trying to free himself from this, dragged it until it became wedged fast between two Arjuna trees and with a strong pull the trees were uprooted. The people, astonished because the trees fell when no storm was blowing, thought the place must be unlucky and moved away to Vrindāvana. The Bhāgavata says that these trees were two sons of Kuvera, the god of riches, who, owing to a curse of the sage Nārada, were thus metamorphosed, and that it was for the purpose of liberating them that Krishna accomplished this feat. Krishna and Balarāma, "the guardians of the world, were keepers of cattle in the cowpens of Vrindāvana," until they were seven years of age, during which years, according to the 'Bhāgavata Purāna,' the boys were full of childish tricks: stealing butter from the neighbouring cowherds appears to have been their favourite pastime.

KRISHNA SLAYING BAKĀSURA.

In the 'Bhāgavata Purāna' there are legends also of attempts being made by Kansa to rid himself of his dreaded foe. One day a demon was sent who hoped to surprise him when wandering with the cattle in the wood. But the boy, seeing through his disguise, seized him by the feet, swung him round his head and dashed him so violently on

ground and he immediately died. The next day another demon, assuming the form of an immense crane, seized Krishna with his bill; but he became so hot that the crane immediately released him: Krishna then crushed its beak under his foot. Yet another came as an immense serpent, and swallowed Krishna and some of his companions, the cowherds, with their cows; but he was no sooner in the reptile's stomach than he expanded himself, and burst open his prison. Krishna was not always defending himself; often he greatly benefited his companions. When Brahma stole some calves, and carried off the boys who tended them, Krishna made other calves and other boys, so that the theft was never known by the cowherds.

We now return to the narrative of the 'Vishnu Purāna.' The river Yamuna was the home of the serpent Kaliya, who made its waters boil with the fires of passion, so that the large trees on its banks were blighted by its fumes, and birds were killed by its heat. Krishna, seeing how his friends at Vrindāvana were inconvenienced by this, plunged into the stream, much to the dismay of the cowherds, and, after challenging the serpent to fight, was about to slay him; but moved by the intercession of the lady serpents allowed him to live on condition that he and his family forsook the Yamuna, and took up their abode in the sea.

On one occasion Krishna wished to annoy Indra. Seeing the Gopas (cowherds) preparing to worship the giver of rain, he dissuaded them from it, and urged them to worship instead the mountain that supplies their cattle with food, and their cattle that yield them milk. Acting upon this advice, they presented to the mountain Govarddhana "curds, milk, and flesh." This was merely a device by which Krishna himself diverted the worship of Indra to himself; for "upon the summit of the mountain Krishna presented himself, saying, 'I am the mountain,' and partook of much food presented by the Gopas; whilst in his own form as Krishna he ascended the hill along with the cowherds, and worshipped his other self." Having promised them many blessings, the mountain-person of Krishna vanished. Indra, being greatly incensed at the disregard shown to

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Nanda and others sent great floods to destroy them and their cattle, but Krishna raising the mountain Govarddhana aloft on one hand, held it as an umbrella and sheltered his friends from

KRISHNA HOLDING UP MOUNT GOVARDDHANA.

storm for seven days and nights. Indra then visited Krishna praised him for what he had done; and his wife Indrani ated Krishna to be a friend of their son Arjuna.

shna did not by any means confine his attention to the of the cowherds amongst whom he spent his early days.

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On one occasion Satrajit, a worshipper of the Sun, who had received from his lord a magnificent jewel named Syamantaka, came to visit Krishna at Dwaraka, adorned with his jewel, which shone so brightly that the inhabitants thought the Sun himself was present. It was a most marvellous gem, for its possessor received through it "eight loads of gold daily, and was free from all fear of portents, wild beasts, fire, robbers, and famine;" but there was this strange condition attached to its possession: "although it was an inexhaustible source of good to a virtuous person, when worn by a man of bad character it was the cause of his death." Thinking it possible that Krishna, on learning the excellences of the gem, might wish to keep it, Satrajit gave it to his brother Prasena. This brother went to hunt in the forest, having the gem with him, when he was killed by a lion. Jambavat, the king of the bears, seeing the gem in the lion's mouth, killed him and took possession of it himself. When Prasena did not return as he was expected, the Yadavas (Krishna's tribesmen) began to think that Krishna had slain him. To convince them of his innocency, taking with him a number of his brethren, he traced the horse upon which Prasena rode to the place where the lion met and slew its rider, and was acquitted of all blame in the matter. He then followed Jambavat to his cave, and finding the bear-prince Sukumāra playing with the gem, Krishna entered and fought with his father the king for twenty-one days; but as no tidings of him reached his home at Dwaraka, his friends concluded that he must be dead; and by the performance of his funeral ceremonies, the food and water offered for this purpose supporting him during his lengthened conflict, enabled him to overcome Jambavat, who gave him his daughter Jambavati to wife, with whom he returned home in triumph, carrying the gem with him, which he restored to Satrajit, and received from him his daughter Satyabhāma. This gem, after causing several other disputes, was finally given to a good king, Akrura. Krishna confessed that as he had 16,000 wives it was not possible for him to retain it; and also that his wife Satyabhāma would not comply with the conditions imposed upon its possessor.

The Gopis (wives of the cowherds) are represented as

madly in love with Krishna. As he and Balarāma danced the night, they came to play and dance with them; but as all these women could not hold Krishna's hand as they danced, he multiplied himself into as many forms as there were women, each woman believing she held the hand of the true Krishna." On one occasion he watched the Gopis as they went to bathe in the Yamuna river, and, stealing their clothes, sat in a tree and refused to restore them up until each came in the form of a suppliant with uplifted hands to fetch them. The Bhāgavata teaches that these women, impelled though they were by passion to seek Krishna, obtained through him final emancipation from sin. "In whatever way a man may worship him he will obtain deliverance. Some knew and sought him as a son, some as a friend, some as an enemy, some as a lover, but in the end all obtained the blessing of deliverance and emancipation."

Amongst all these women Krishna's favourite was Rādhā, the wife of Ayanagosha. Her sister-in-law, seeing them together, told her brother of his wife's misconduct, and Rādhā was in fear lest he should murder her; when however she communicated her fears to her lover, he reassured her, as he told her that when her husband came, he (Krishna) would transform himself into Kāli, and her husband, instead of seeing her with a lover, would find her engaged in worshipping a goddess. Her husband happening to come soon after this, and finding her so employed, joined with her in the worship of Krishna in the form of Kāli. It is Rādhā whose name is ever associated with Krishna in hymns, songs, prayers, and pictures; at this day all the wives of this deity are forgotten, but Rādhā is worshipped along with her lover.

As Krishna was dancing on one occasion with these women, a demon named Arishta, in the form of a fierce bull, savagely attacked him. Krishna quietly waited its approach, and, seizing him as an alligator would have done, held him by the horns whilst he pressed his sides with his knees: he then wrung his

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[1] This incident in Krishna's history, which is celebrated yearly at the Dasara.

thought as if it had been a piece of wet cloth, and at last tearing off his horns beat him to death with them.

After some years Kansa is informed of Krishna's existence,

RĀDHĀ WORSHIPPING KRISHNA AS KĀLI.

and, as we have noticed above, sent various demons to slay him; but as these efforts failed, the king determined on a grand scheme by which he hoped to rid himself of his dreaded foe. He accordingly sent Akrura, one of the few good men in his kingdom, with a most polite invitation to Krishna and Balarāma to visit him at his capital to witness some athletic sports; and,

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in the hope that they being off their guard would fall an easy prey, suborned a demon named Kesin, in the form of a horse, to attack them on the road. But Krishna is more than a match for the fiend: he meets the horse and fearlessly thrusts his hand in its mouth, and, causing it to swell, bursts the horse into two parts: hence one of Krishna's many names is Kesava, the slayer of Kesin.

Akrura, having told Krishna of the ill-feeling of Kansa and of the plots that have been made against his life, and being greatly encouraged with the assurance that in three days Kansa and his adherents would be slain, takes his leave of the guests when they approach the city of Mathura. Entering the city unattended, and dressed as poor country people, they meet with a washerman of Kansa at work, whom they first annoy by throwing the clothes on the ground, and, when he expostulates with them, kill him, and robe themselves in some of Kansa's garments. Seeing the gaily-dressed, strong, and good-looking young men, a flower-seller presents them with some of his choicest flowers; for his generosity Krishna bestows rich blessings upon him in this life and promises heaven after death. After this they meet with a deformed girl named Kubja, carrying ointments and perfumes to the palace; who, when asked by Krishna, gives him some at once, for which kindness her deformity is cured, and she is made beautiful and then invites the brothers to her home.

The day following was fixed for the sports they had come to witness. The lists were prepared, the trumpets sounded, and two fierce wrestlers were commanded by fair means or foul to slay Krishna and his brother; and in case they should fail to do this, an enormous elephant was in readiness to trample them to death. But wrestlers and elephant were themselves slain. Seeing his grand scheme so signally fail, the king lost his temper and called out loudly to his guards to slay the youths; instead of this, however, Krishna rushed upon and slew the king in the midst of the assembly, and falling at the feet of his father and mother, Vasudeva and Devaki, placed Ugrasena, Kansa's father, upon the throne, and with his brother took up his abode at Mathura.

Krishna is of immense service to the people of Mathura; for very soon after his arrival there, Jarasandha, Kansa's father-in-law,

attacks them, and is beaten eighteen times by his prowess. When the people were almost exhausted with these protracted struggles, a new enemy appears in Kalayāvana, King of the Yāvanas, who wish to try their strength with the Yādavas under Krishna. He, thinking that by having two enemies to contend with at once the people would be exhausted, prepared a new city so strong that women could protect it, to which he conducted the inhabitants of Mathura. No sooner had he made the people secure than he went forth unarmed and alone, and attracted the attention of the King of the Yāvanas, whose army still surrounded Mathura. Krishna, seeing the king following him, entered a cave, and concealed himself there; the king seeing a man lying at its entrance, thinking it must be Krishna, kicked it, and in an instant became a heap of ashes. The secret of his destruction was this: a man named Muchukunda had received as a boon from the gods, the power to sleep for a long period, with the condition attached, that whoever should awake him should be instantly consumed by fire emanating from his body. Unwittingly the King of the Yāvanas kicked him and received the reward of his ignorance; whilst Krishna escaped, and seized the wealth and treasures thus left without an owner.

Among many others, Krishna fell in love with Rukmini, the daughter of *Bhismaka*, King of Vidhabha (Berar); but her brother *Jarasandha* hated him, and refusing to give his consent, at the request of *Jarasandha*, she was betrothed to Sisupāla. This Sisupāla was no other than Hiranyakasipu and Rāvan, whom in their incarnations Vishnu had slain. On the eve of the marriage Krishna carries off Rukmini, who was another form of Lakshmi, Sita, &c., leaving Balarāma and other friends to take care of themselves; and when Rukmin follows him with an overwhelming army, Krishna easily destroys his followers, and, but for the intercession of Rukmini, would have killed his brother-

After this occurrence, Indra pays a visit to Krishna, to solicit sympathy and help against Naraka, King of Pragjyotisha, who was inflicting all kinds of evil upon all creation. He had carried off the maidens of the gods, saints, demons and kings

he shuts them up in his own palace. He has taken away Varuna's umbrella, the celestial nectar-dropping earrings of my mother Aditi, and now demands my elephant." Krishna at once consents to help, marches off to meet the king, conquers all his forces, slays Naraka and obtains the stolen property, for which on its restoration he receives the thanks of its owners. In the women's apartment he finds 16,100 damsels, and "at an auspicious moment received the hands of all, according to the ritual, in separate houses; 16,100 was the number of the maidens, and into so many forms did the foe of Madhu multiply himself; so that each of the damsels thought he had wedded her in his single person, and he abode severally in the dwelling-place of each of his wives. It was as a present from Umā, the wife of Siva, that he received these wives."

There was once a severe conflict between Krishna and Siva. Aniruddha, a grandson of Krishna, was enamoured of Usha, a daughter of Bāna, one of Siva's worshippers, whom he secretly visited. Being caught on one of these secret visits by Bāna's guard, the prince was imprisoned, and, as the king would [illegible] release him, Krishna attacked him; but Siva and [illegible] Kartikeya fought for Bāna. After severe fighting, as [illegible] down weary in his car, and Kartikeya had fled from [illegible] Krishna, tired of using ordinary weapons, let fly his [illegible] discus, which never failed of accomplishing his wis[illegible] the hundred arms of Bāna. As he was about to thr[illegible] time, Siva came and interceded for the life of his friend [illegible] in granting his request, Krishna said: "You are fit to [illegible] that you are not distinct from me; that which I am, t[illegible]

As Krishna was marching towards Sonitapura, [illegible] which his grandson was confined, as narrated above [illegible] enemy met him. "Fever, an emanation from Maheshw[illegible] having three feet and three heads, fought desper[illegible] Krishna in defence of Bāna. Baladeva (Balarāma), u[illegible] his ashes were scattered, was seized with burning hea[illegible] eyelids trembled; but he obtained relief by clinging to [illegible] of Krishna. Contending thus with the divine holder o[illegible] the Fever emanating from Siva was quickly expelled [illegible]

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him as supreme. In the Mahābhārata,
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Krishna, wherefore no one is dearer to
hymn Krishna thus praises Siva: "I
various works of old. For he is the
d of (all) creatures." Bhisma says:
Rudra, the world is pervaded by the
hava performed austerities for a full
Siva, the god who bestows boons."
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then the never-failing discus did its work.
the Mahābhārata, Siva praises Krishna in
language as that employed by Krishna
tude of Krishna is so thoroughly opposed
throughout the poem, there can be lit
passages were introduced when the worshi
large extent superseded that of Siva.

Krishna, as described in the Mahābh
employing deception, and leading other
occasion during the great war between t
the Pāndavas were in great distress, o
skill of a Kuru chief named Dronāc
son whom he deeply loved, named
thought that, if a report could be s
son was slain, his father would
Dronāchārjya at last heard the run
unless Yudishthira confirmed it.
to speak an untruth; but at Kri
the words "Ashwatthama is dead
elephant of that name, yet wish
them of his son. The trick s
punishment for his prevaricatio
lost in hell, as he was being con

Amongst Krishna's many n
common:—

Gopal, "The Cowherd."
Gopinath, "The Lord of th
Mathuranath, "The Lord

8A. THE B

According to some
Balarāma is the *eighth*;
an incarnation, but an
according to others, th

[illegible] produced from a black and Balarāma from
[illegible] As they were constant companions
[illegible] earth, many
[illegible] ich Balarāma
the Fever he h[illegible] een narrated
to Krishna: [illegible] na. There
shall be exemp[illegible] owever, re-
Krishna was [illegible] ma.
professed that [illegible] rnation of
Vāsudeva (son [illegible] o himself
Benares was in[illegible] thus is
request sent an[illegible] part" of
and at the sam[illegible] d to by
insignia of office. [illegible] ear on
ting off next day [illegible] their
and addressing F[illegible] year
envoy to resign t[illegible] l, by
you. Here is my [illegible] ryo
mount upon thy s[illegible] ini.
of Krishna was [illegible] ng
continued to fight. [illegible] the
people cried in th[illegible] ho
female form came [illegible] of
obedient to Krishna [illegible]
it was attacked by [illegible] on it had been predicted that
was such that it co[illegible] When about a year old, this
form of Siva had hid[illegible] a herdsman named Nanda
When Krishna had [illegible] parents of Krishna, that the
destroyed demons an[illegible] her; Vasudeva, on the night
came for him to ret[illegible]
owing to a curse pron[illegible]
that the Yādava race [illegible]
This curse was the [illegible] serpent deity, has a thousand
boys to Nārada and [illegible] eposes during the intervals in
devotions. These boys [illegible] of Sesha, who stands upon a
named Sāmba, as a wo[illegible] feet, or Sesha yawns, earth-
"What child will this fe[illegible] the rope at the churning of
[illegible] the world is destroyed of
[illegible] called a son of Kasyapa

BALARĀMA.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA

of Krishna's birth, having carried him to [illegible] ernst the and substituted him for the infant daughte[illegible] the Rishis, a Balarâma was second only to Krishna [illegible]da ordered to miraculous powers. One day, as he was [illegible] But the dust keepers in a wood, his companions aske[illegible] all part of the fruit trees belonging to a demon named Dh[illegible] his part, when enjoy th[illegible] it. As he was complying [illegible] ich was caught demon, [illegible] form of a monster ass, app[illegible] into an arrow to kr[illegible]âma, the hero seized him [illegible]ma, telling him him [illegible] his head, and threw him to th[illegible]s home: this he that [illegible]ed immediately: the dead bo[illegible]s face from the top of [illegible] palm tree, and the dem[illegible]o forsake their to his rescue received similar treatm[illegible] unintentionally Dhenuka's death, his orchard beca[illegible]e they indulged cowherds. Whilst the boys were pl[illegible]ves, and for arms Pralamba came in the form of a b[illegible] of the fatal club game, persuaded Balarama to get [illegible]a trying to make him he mounted than the demo[illegible] their swifter de- the hero to be heavy he increase[illegible] left alone of their a mountain in size, causing Bal[illegible]nks of a river, a to call upon Krishna for help[illegible]e serpent Sesha, of divine nature, says: "Calling to[illegible]as come. Krishna, of illimitable might, destroy th[illegible] his knee, when the while your mortal character, [illegible]ssed by, and taking upon this advice, squeezed [illegible]eath was unwittingly pummelled him with his fis[illegible]b. Jara, seeing his dead. When boxing with [illegible]orgiveness, to whom Mathura, he managed easily [illegible] Go, hunter, through After Balarama had dw[illegible]ds." Immediately a Krishna had provided for [illegible] ascended to heaven; Krishna sent him to Vraja [illegible] with whom they had be[illegible] followed the 'Vishnu there, Varuna, addressin[illegible]; though the latter has are ever acceptable to th[illegible]se given above. The and promote his enjoy[illegible] regarding his divinity; she took up her abo[illegible]upied with praises and Vrindâvana. Balara[illegible]

fragrance of the liquor produced from that tree, resumed his ancient passion for strong drink. Whilst in a state of intoxication caused by this juice, he called to the river Yamuna to come to him that he might bathe in her, and, when she refused, threw his ploughshare into the stream, and dragging her towards him made her follow him wherever he went, until, his anger being appeased, he set her free.

On his return to Dwaraka, after this visit to his friends, he married Revati, daughter of King Raivata. This king, wishing to obtain a suitable husband for his daughter, repaired to Brahmā for advice, who, expatiating on the glories of Vishnu, detained his suppliant in heaven for ages. On returning to the earth he was surprised to find that during his long absence men had deteriorated in goodness, size, and strength; but following Brahmā's counsel, he went to Dwaraka, and offered his daughter as wife to Balarāma, who accepted the offer. Balarāma was astonished at her immense height, but by the use of his ploughshare, however, managed to reduce her to a proper size. On one occasion, as Balarāma and Devaki were together, they were greatly annoyed by a demon named Dwivida, who had the power to assume various forms. He came as a monkey and being a source of annoyance to gods and men, chiefly through interrupting the sacrifices, was felled by a blow of Balarāma's heavy fist.

Though the brothers Krishna and Balarāma were generally the best of friends, there was once a most violent quarrel between them. A man named Satadhanwan was suspected of stealing a most valuable jewel.* Krishna and Balarāma pursuing him, came to a part of the country where the roads were so bad that the horses could not drag the chariot; Balarāma therefore remained with the chariot, whilst Krishna followed the supposed thief on foot. When within reach, the never-missing discus was thrown, and the man fell headless, but the gem was not to be found. On Krishna's return to the chariot without the jewel, believing that he had stolen it, Balarāma "flew into a violent rage, and said to Vāsudeva: 'Shame light upon you to be thus

* For a fuller account of this jewel, see p. 175.

greedy of wealth! I acknowledge no brotherhood with you. Here lies my path; go whither you please, I have done with you, with Dwaraka, with all our house. It is of no use to seek to impose on me with thy perjuries." Balarāma proceeded to Videha, where for three years he remained the guest of King Janaka, until his anger was appeased, when, acknowledging that he had misjudged his brother, he returned to his home at Dwaraka.

When Krishna's work on earth was done, and, except the two brothers, their whole race had in fulfilment of a curse been destroyed, as they were talking under a tree, a serpent glided from Balarāma's mouth and made its way to the sea, leaving the body lifeless, whilst Krishna soon afterwards fell pierced by the arrow of a huntsman who mistook him for a deer.

9. THE BUDDHA AVATĀRA.

BUDDHA.

This incarnation of Vishnu is "originally foreign to the cycle of the Avatāras of Vishnu, and therefore is only briefly alluded to in some of the Purānas. Where this is done, the intention must have been to effect a compromise between Brāhmanism and Buddhism, by trying to represent the latter religion as not irreconcilably antagonistic to the former."* Colonel Kennedy,† on the other hand, argues that the Buddha of the Purānas and Buddha the founder of the Buddhist system of religion have nothing in common but the name, and that the attempted identification of these two is simply the

* Goldstücker, Chambers's Cyclopædia. † 'Hindu Myth.' p. 218.

...of European scholars, who have not been sufficiently careful to collect information and to weigh the evidence they have

BUDDHIST TEMPLE AND DAGOBA AT KELANIYA, CEYLON.

had before them. There can be little doubt that Colonel Kennedy's view is untenable. Seeing the bitter antagonism that

existed between the followers of the rival systems, it need occasion no surprise that full accounts of Buddha are not to be found in Brāhmanical books, nor that the meagre accounts that are there should try to represent him as a most despicable character. The Brāhmanical writers were far too shrewd to admit that one who could influence men as Buddha did could be other than an incarnation of deity; and as his influence was in favour of teaching opposed to their own, which was for a time prohibited throughout the country, they cleverly say that it was to mislead the enemies of the gods that Buddha promulgated his doctrine, that they, becoming weak and wicked through their errors, might fall an easy prey.

The Purānic account of Buddha will be given, supplemented by further particulars of his life and work from Buddhist writings.

In the 'Bhāgavata Purāna'* are only four short passages respecting Buddha. "At the commencement of the Kali-yuga will Vishnu become incarnate in Kikata, under the name of Buddha, the son of Jina, for the purpose of deluding the enemies of the gods." "The Undiscernible Being, having assumed a mortal form, preached heretical doctrines in the three cities founded by Māya (and in Kasi), for the purpose of destroying, by deluding them, the enemies of the gods, steadfast in the religion prescribed by the Vedas." "Praise to the pure Buddha, the deluder of the Daityas and the Dānavas." "By his words, as Buddha, Vishnu deludes the heretics."

In the Skanda,† the legend, of which the Bhāgavata gives but the merest outline, is more fully given. There was a dire famine in the earth, owing to the failure of the rains for six successive years; on this account Brahmā in great distress visited a prince named Ripanjaya, and told him that if he would become king, the gods would serve him, and his name should be changed to Divodāsa. On asking why he is chosen before all others, Brahmā tells him: "All other kings are wicked, and the gods will not shower rain upon the earth unless you

* 'Hindu Myth.' p. 250. † Ibid. p. 423.

accept the government." Divodāsa accedes to Brahmā's request on condition that that deity would assist him and that all the other gods would forsake the earth, so that he might reign without a rival, and be the only one who could confer happiness on men. Brahmā, in fulfilling this condition, with some difficulty persuaded Siva to forsake Kāsi (Benares), his favourite dwelling-place.

Divodāsa fixed his throne at Kāsi, where for 8000 years he ruled with the greatest benefit to men; but the gods being jealous of his power went to Vrihaspati, their preceptor, and, whilst they spoke well of the effects of the king's government, complained that he, and not the gods, were benefited by it. Siva especially was annoyed at his enforced absence from Kāsi; for although he sent several times to make inquiries about its inhabitants, his messengers were too happy on earth to return to their lord in heaven. Vishnu, accompanied by Lakshmi and Garuda, at Siva's request, "then proceeded to Kāsi, a little to the north of which he formed by his divine power a pleasant abode named Dharmakshetra, and there, attended by his lovely spouse, did he reside under the form of Buddha, while Lakshmi became a female recluse of that sect. Garuda also appeared under the name of Panyakirti, as a pupil with a book in his hand, and attentively listening to the delusive instructions of his preceptor (Buddha), who with a low, sweet, and affectionate voice taught him various branches of natural and supernatural religion."

Vishnu, as Buddha, taught that "the universe was without a creator; it is false therefore to assert that there is one universal and Supreme Spirit, for Brahmā, Vishnu, Rudra, and the rest are names of mere corporeal beings like ourselves. Death is a peaceful sleep: why fear it?" He further taught that "we should guard as our own life the life of another: that pleasure is the only heaven, and pain the only hell, and liberation from ignorance the sole beatitude. Sacrifices are acts of folly." Through the exertions of Panyakirti, these doctrines soon spread throughout the city; whilst Lakshmi deluded the women by teaching them to "place all happiness in sensual

pleasures as the body must decay before it becomes fitted to enjoy the pleasures which it gives. The distinction of castes has been vainly imagined." As Lakshmi gave numerous boons to her disciples, her influence was great, and her teaching spread widely.

As a result of the dissemination of these doctrines in the city, Divodasa became dispirited, to whom Vishnu in the form of a Brāhman now appeared, and hears from him an account of his troubles, and the expression of a wish to resign his crown. The king mentions a number of cases in which virtuous men have had to suffer, owing to the power of the gods, and inquires how he can obtain final beatitude. Vishnu informs him that he has acted unwisely in compelling Siva to forsake Kāsi, and advises him to consecrate an image of Siva, by worshipping which he will obtain the fulfilment of his desires. Divodasa follows this counsel, inaugurates his son as king, and, as he is worshipping the Linga he had set up, Siva appears and conducts him to Kailasa (Siva's heaven). It is the common belief of the people in the west of India, that when Vishnu had effected the apostasy of Divodasa, having been prevailed upon to terminate the propagation of his heretical opinions, he disappeared in a deep well at Gya.

The following legend from the 'Siva Purāna'* gives another reason for the rise of Buddhism. A famous Rishi named Gautama, with his virtuous wife named Ahalyā, performed during a thousand years a severe *tapas* (penance) in the southern country near the mountain Brahmādri. During this time there was a severe drought, to remove which, Gautama worshipped Varuna for six months with great fervour, when the deity, appearing, promised to grant any boon that should be asked. Gautama asked for rain, but Varuna said: "How can I transgress the divine command? Ask some boon which it is in my power to grant." Gautama then asked that Varuna would cause a surpassingly beautiful hermitage to appear, shaded from the sun by fragrant and fruit-bearing trees, where holy men and

* Kennedy, 'Hindu Myth.' p. 253.

women in holy meditation shall be liberated from pain, sorrow, and anxiety; and as thou art lord of water, let it enjoy a perennial fountain." Varuna granted this request, and the hermitage of Gautama became "the loveliest on the terrestrial orb."

One day as the disciples of Gautama went to the fountain some Brāhman women tried to prevent them from drawing water until they had filled their own pots. Ahalyā going herself was subjected daily to the same annoyance: the Brāhman women would not allow her to draw water before they had themselves obtained all they required. These women, not satisfied with annoying the ascetics, complained to their husbands of the unkind treatment they alleged they had received from Ahalyā. Their husbands resorted to Ganesa for advice, who being pleased with their devotion promised a boon; they asked that Gautama might be made to leave his hermitage without their incurring the sin of driving him away. To this Ganesa reluctantly consented; and in order to effect this object Ganesa transformed himself into a poor debilitated cow, and walked into a field of rice where Gautama was standing and began to eat the grain. The sage, knowing nothing of this disguise, took up a straw and tried to drive the cow away; no sooner did he touch it than it fell down dead. Having incurred the enormous guilt of killing a cow, the poor man had to leave the neighbourhood.

Gautama and his wife removed to a distance; but until he had expiated his sin, they could not perform any acceptable worship. Gautama seeks the Brāhmans, and asking how he can be free from his crime, is told to walk round the mountain of Brahmā a hundred times; bathe in the Ganges, and consecrate and worship ten million images of Siva. As he is worshipping Siva, the deity, delighted with the man's earnestness, appears, informs him of the trick by which Ganesa had driven him from the hermitage, and brings the Ganges so near that he can bathe in it easily. Tradition says that Gautama was so disgusted with the conduct of the Brāhmans that he separated himself from their communion, and established a new system which for a

The following extracts giving an account of Buddha, are from the 'Lalita-Vistara,' a Buddhist work from which M. Barthelemy St. Hilaire has taken the materials for his work 'La Boudda et sa Religion.'

BUDDHA.

"Buddha, or more correctly, The Buddha—for Buddha is an appellative, meaning enlightened—was born at Kapilavastu, the capital of a kingdom of that name, situated at the foot of the mountains of Nepal, north of the present Oude. His father, the King of Kapilavastu, was of the family of the Sākyas, and belonged to the clan of the Gautamas. His mother was Mayadevi, daughter of King Suprabuddha, and need we say that she was beautiful, as he was powerful and just? Buddha was therefore by birth of the Kshattriya, or warrior caste, and he took the name of Sākya from his family, and that of Gautama from his clan, claiming a kind of spiritual relationship with the honoured race of Gautamas. The name of Buddha, or The Buddha, dates from a later period of his life, and so probably does Siddhartha (he whose objects have been accomplished), although we are told that it was given him in his childhood. His mother died seven days after his birth, and the father confided the child to the care of his deceased wife's sister, who, however, had been his wife even before the mother's death. The child grew up a most beautiful and most accomplished boy, who soon knew more than his masters could teach him. He refused to take part in the games of his playmates, and never felt so happy as when he could sit alone, lost in meditation in the deep shadows of the forest. It was [illegible]e that his father found him

when he had thought him lost; and, in order to prevent the young prince from becoming a dreamer, the king determined to marry him at once. When the subject was mentioned by the aged ministers to the future heir to the throne, he demanded seven days for reflection, and, convinced at last that not even marriage could disturb the calm of his mind, he allowed the ministers to look out for a princess. The princess selected was the beautiful Gopā, the daughter of Dandapani. Though her father objected at first to her marrying a young prince who was represented to him as deficient in manliness and intellect, he gladly gave his consent when he saw the royal suitor distancing all his rivals in feats of arms and power of mind. Their marriage proved one of the happiest, but the prince remained, as he had been before, absorbed in meditations on the problems of life and death. 'Nothing is stable on earth,' he used to say, 'nothing is real. Life is like the spark produced by the friction of wood. It is lighted and is extinguished—we know not whence it came or whither it goes. It is like the sound of a lyre, and the wise man asks in vain from whence it came and whither it goes. There must be some supreme intelligence where we can find rest. If I attained it, I could bring light to man; if I were free myself, I could deliver the world.' The king, who perceived the melancholy mood of the young prince, tried everything to divert him from his speculations; but all was in vain. Three of the most ordinary events that could happen to any man, proved of the utmost importance in the career of Buddha.

"One day, when the prince with a large retinue was driving through the Eastern gate of the city on the way to one of his parks, he met on the road an old man, broken and decrepit. One could see the veins and muscles over the whole of his body, his teeth chattered, he was covered with wrinkles, bald, and barely able to utter hollow and unmelodious sounds. He was bent on his stick, and all his limbs and joints trembled. 'Who is this man?' said the prince to his coachman. 'He is small and weak, his flesh and his blood are dried up, his muscles stick to his skin, his teeth chatter, his body is wasted away; leaning

on his stick, he is hardly able to walk, stumbling at every step. Is there something peculiar in his family, or is this the common lot of all created beings?'

"'Sir,' replied the coachman, 'that man is sinking under old age, his senses have become obscure, suffering has destroyed his strength, and he is despised by his relations. He is without support and useless, and people have abandoned him, like a dead tree in a forest. But this is not peculiar to his family. In every creature youth is defeated by old age. Your father, your mother, all your relations, all your friends, will come to the same state; this is the appointed end of all creatures.'

"'Alas!' replied the prince, 'are creatures so ignorant, so weak and foolish, as to be proud of the youth by which they are intoxicated, not seeing the old age which awaits them? As for me, I go away. Coachman, turn my chariot quickly. What am I, the future prey of old age—what have I to do with pleasure?' and the young prince returned to the city without going to the park.

"Another time the prince was driving through the Southern gate to his pleasure garden, when he perceived in the road a man suffering from illness, parched with fever, his body wasted, covered with mud, without a friend, without a home, hardly able to breathe, and frightened at the sight of himself and the approach of death. Having questioned his coachman, and received from him the answer which he expected, the young prince said: 'Alas! health is but the sport of a dream, and the fear of suffering must take this frightful form. Where is the wise man, who, after having seen what he is, could any longer think of joy and pleasure?' The prince turned his chariot, and returned to the city.

"A third time he was driving to his pleasure-garden through the Western gate, when he saw a dead body on the road, lying on a bier and covered with a cloth. The friends stood about crying, sobbing, tearing their hair, covering their heads with dust, striking their breasts, and uttering wild cries. The prince, again calling his coachman to witness this painful scene, exclaimed: 'Oh! woe to youth, which must be destroyed by old age! Woe to health, which must be destroyed by so many diseases!

Woe to this life where a man must remain for so short a time! Then, bringing for the first time his intentions, the young prince said: 'Let us turn back, I must think now to accomplish deliverance.'

"A fast meeting put an end to his hesitation. He was driving through the Northern gate on the way to his pleasure-gardens when he saw a mendicant who appeared outwardly calm, subdued, looking downwards, wearing with an air of dignity his religious vestment and carrying an alms-bowl.

"'Who is this man?' asked the prince.

"'Sir,' replied the coachman, 'this man is one of those who are called *bhikshus* or mendicants. He has renounced all pleasures, all desires, and leads a life of austerity. He tries to conquer himself. He has become a devotee. Without passion, without envy, he walks about asking for alms.'

"'This is good and well said,' replied the prince. 'The life of a devotee has always been praised by the wise. It will be my refuge, and the refuge of all other creatures. It will lead us to a real life, to happiness and immortality.' With these words the young prince turned his chariot and returned to the city.

"After having declared to his father and his wife his intention of retiring from the world, Buddha left his palace one night when all the guards that were to have watched him were asleep. After travelling the whole night, he gave his horse and his ornaments to his groom, and sent him back to Kapilavastu. 'A monument,' remarks the author of the 'Lalita-Vistara,' 'is still to be seen on the spot where the coachman turned back.' Hiouen Thsang saw the same monument at the edge of a large forest, on his road to Kusinagara, a city now in ruins, and situated about fifty miles E.S.E. from Gorakpore.

"Buddha first went to Vaisali, and became the pupil of a famous Brâhman, who had gathered round him 500 disciples. Having learnt all that the Brâhman could teach him, Buddha went away disappointed. He had not found the road to salvation. He then tried another Brâhman at Râjagriha, the capital of Magadha or Behar, who had 700 disciples, and there, too, he looked in vain for the means of deliverance. He left him, followed by five of his fellow-students, and for six years retired into soli-

India, near a village named Uruvilva, subjecting himself to the most severe penances, previous to his appearing in the world as a teacher. At the end of this period, however, he arrived at the conviction that asceticism, far from giving peace of mind and preparing the way to salvation, was a snare and a stumbling-block in the way of truth. He gave up his exercises, and was at once deserted as an apostate by his five disciples. Left to himself, he now began to elaborate his own system. He had learned that neither the doctrines nor the austerities of the Brahmans were of any avail for accomplishing the deliverance of man, and for freeing him from the fear of old age, disease, and death. After long meditations and ecstatic visions, he at last imagined that he had arrived at that true knowledge which discloses the cause, and thereby destroys the fear, of all the changes inherent in life. It was from the moment when he arrived at this knowledge that he claimed the name of Buddha the enlightened. Buddha hesitated for a time whether he should keep his knowledge to himself or communicate it to the world. Compassion for the sufferings of man prevailed, and the young prince became the founder of a religion, which after more than 2000 years is still professed by 455,000,000 of human beings.

"The further history of the new teacher is very simple. He proceeded to Benares, which at all times has been the principal seat of learning in India, and the first converts he made were the five fellow-students who had left him when he threw off the yoke of the Brahmanical observances. Many others followed, but as the 'Lalita-Vistara' breaks off at Buddha's arrival at Benares, we have no further consecutive account of the rapid progress of his doctrine. From what we can gather from scattered notices in the Buddhist canon, he was invited by the King of Magadha, Bimbisāra, to his capital, Rājagriha. Many of his lectures are represented as having been delivered at the monastery of Kalavataka, with which the king or some rich merchant had presented him; others on the Vulture Peak, one of the five hills which surround that ancient capital.

"Three of his most famous disciples—Sariputra, Kāsyapa, and Maudgalyāyana—joined him during his stay in Magadha,

where he enjoyed for many years the friendship of the king. The king was afterward assassinated by his son Ajātasatru, and then we hear of Buddha as settled for a time at Srāvasti, north of the Ganges. Most of Buddha's lectures were delivered at Srāvasti, the capital of Kosala, and the King of Kosala himself, Prasenajit, became a convert to his doctrine. After an absence of twelve years, we are told that Buddha visited his father at Kapilavastu, on which occasion he performed several miracles, and converted all the Sākyas to his faith. His own wife became one of his followers, and, with his aunt, offers the first instance of female Buddhist devotees in India.

"We have fuller particulars again of the last days of Buddha's life. He had attained the good age of threescore years and ten, and had been on a visit to Rājagriha, where the king Ajātasatru, the former enemy of Buddha and the assassin of his own father, had joined the congregation, after making a public confession of his crimes. On his return he was followed by a large number of disciples, and when on the point of crossing the Ganges, he stood on a square stone, and turning his eyes back towards Rājagriha, he said, full of emotion, 'This is the last time that I shall see that city.' He likewise visited Vaisali, and, after taking leave of it, he had nearly reached the city of Kusināgara, when his vital strength began to fail. He halted in a forest, and, while sitting under a Sāl tree, he gave up the ghost, or, as a Buddhist would say, entered into Nirvāna."

The following verses by Dr. Muir * are a translation of part of the 'Lalita-Vistara,' from which the quotations given above were made:

"On Himalaya's lonely steep
There lived of old an holy sage,
Of shrivelled form, and bent with age,
Inured to meditation deep.

"He—when great Buddha had been born,
The glory of the Sākya race,
Endowed with every holy grace,
To save the suffering world forlorn—

* O. S. T. ii. 496.

"Beheld strange portents, signs which taught
The wise that that auspicious time
Had witnessed some event sublime,
With universal blessing fraught.

"The sky with joyful gods was thronged;
He heard their voice with glad acclaim
Resounding loudly Buddha's name,
While echoes clear their shouts prolonged.

"The cause exploring, far and wide
The sage's vision ranged: with awe,
Within a cradle laid, he saw
Far off the babe, the Sākyas' pride.

"With longing seized this child to view
At hand, and clasp, and homage pay,
Athwart the sky he took his way
By magic art, and swan-like flew;

"And came to King Suddhōdan's gates;
And entrance craved—'Go, royal page,
And tell thy lord an ancient sage
To see the king permission waits.'

"The page obeyed, and joined his hands
Before the prince, and said—'A sage
Of shrivelled form, and bowed with age,
Before the gate, my sovereign, stands,

"'And humbly asks to see the king.'
To whom Suddhōdan cried—'We greet
All such with joy; with honour meet
The holy man before us bring!'

"The saint beside the monarch stood,
And spake his blessing—'Thine be health,
With length of life, and might, and wealth;
And ever seek thy people's good.'

"With all due forms and meet respect
The king received the holy man
And bade him sit; and then began—
'Great sage, I do not recollect

"'That I thy venerable face
Have ever seen before ; allow
That I inquire what brings thee now
From thy far distant dwelling-place.'

"'To see thy babe,' the saint replies,
'I come from Himālaya's steeps.'
The king rejoins, 'My infant sleeps ;
A moment wait until he rise.'

"'Such great ones ne'er,' the Rishi spake,
'In torpor long their senses steep,
Nor softly love luxurious sleep ;
The infant prince will soon awake.'

"The wondrous child, alert to rise,
At will his slumbers light dispelled.
His father's arms the infant held
Before the sage's longing eyes.

"The babe beholding, passing bright,
More glorious than the race divine,
And marked with every noble sign,
The saint was whelmed with deep delight ;

"And crying—'Lo ! an infant graced
With every charm of form I greet !'
He fell before the Buddha's feet,
With fingers joined, and round him paced.

"Next round the babe his arms he wound,
And 'one,' he said, 'of two careers
Of fame awaits in coming years
The child in whom these signs are found.

"'If such an one at home abide,
He shall become a king, whose sway
Supreme a mighty armed array
On earth shall 'stablish far and wide.

"'If, spurning worldly pomp as vain,
He choose to lead a tranquil life,
And wander forth from home and wife,
He then a Buddha's rank shall gain.'

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"He spoke, and on the infant gazed,
When tears suffused his aged eyes;
His bosom heaved with heavy sighs;
Then King Suddhōdan asked, amazed—

"'Say, holy man, what makes thee weep
And deeply sigh? Does any fate
Malign the child await?
May heavenly powers my infant keep!'

"'For thy fair infant's weal no fears
Disturb me, king,' the Rishi cried;
'No ill can such a child betide;
My own sad lot commands my tears.

"'In every grace complete, thy son
Of truth shall perfect insight gain,
And far sublimer fame attain
Than ever lawgiver has won.

"'He such a wheel of sacred lore
Shall speed on earth to roll,
As yet hath never been in motion set
By priest, or sage, or god of yore.

"'The world of men and gods to bless,
The way of rest and peace to teach,
A holy law thy son shall preach—
A law of stainless righteousness.

"'By him shall suffering men be freed
From weakness, sickness, pain, and grief;
From all the ills shall find relief
Which hatred, love, illusion breed.

"'His hands shall loose the chains of all
Who groan in earthly bonds confined;
With healing touch the wounds shall bind
Of those whom pain's sharp arrows gall.

"'His words of power shall put to flight
The dull array of leaden clouds
Which helpless mortals' vision shrouds
And clear their intellectual sight.

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"'By him shall men, who now benighted
In devious paths of error stray,
Be led to find a perfect way—
To final calm at last be brought.

"'But once, O king, in many years,
The fig-tree somewhere flowers, perhaps;
So, after countless ages lapse,
A Buddha once on earth appears.

"'And now, at length, this blessed time
Has come: for he, who cradled lies
An infant there before thine eyes,
Shall be a Buddha in his prime.

"'Full, perfect insight gaining, he
Shall rescue endless myriads lost
On life's rough ocean waves, and lost,
And grant them immortality.

"'But I am old, and frail, and worn;
I shall not live the day to see
When this thy wondrous child shall free
From woe the suffering world forlorn.

"'Tis thus mine own unhappy fate
Which bids me mourn, and weep, and sigh;
The Buddha's triumph now is nigh,
But, ah! for me it comes too late!'

"When thus the aged saint, inspired,
Had all the infant's greatness told,
The king, [illegible],
And sang, with pious ardour fired:—

"'Thee, child, th' immortals worship all,
The great Physician, born to cure
All ills that hapless men endure;
I, too, before thee prostrate fall!'

"And now—his errand done—the sage,
Dismissed with gifts and human due,
Athwart the ether swanlike flew,
And reached again his hermitage."

Buddhism, the system of religion taught by Buddha, starts with the doctrine common to it and Hinduism of the transmigration of souls. It then goes on to say that pain and pleasure are simply the result of Karma (works), no notice whatever being taken of the existence or non-existence of God. It assumes that existence is and must be miserable; and that the highest conceivable good is to obtain entire exemption from existence. Death does not necessarily bring this exemption; it may be but an entrance into a worse form of it than is at present endured. Buddha's four "Sublime verities," containing the gem of his system, are as follows:—The first is that pain exists; the second that desire is the cause of pain; the third, that pain can be ended by Nirvāna, or exemption from existence, annihilation; the fourth shows the way that leads to Nirvāna. The great thing is to get rid of desire, and when this is accomplished, the soul is ready to complete Nirvāna, and a man dying in this state will not again be born. He taught the evil of caste distinctions, and all who embraced his tenets became members of a great brotherhood. Instead of the painful mortifications and costly sacrifices by which the Hindus were compelled to make expiation for sin, he taught that confession and promise of amendment were all that was necessary. Its moral code is one of the most perfect in the world: and the spring of all virtue is *Maitri*, which can only be translated as charity or love. "It does not express friendship, or the feeling of particular affection which a man has for one or more of his fellow-creatures, but that universal benevolence which inspires us with good-will towards all men and a willingness to help them."

There is one peculiarity of the followers of Buddha which they have in common with the Hindus, viz. the preservation of and veneration for relics of their founder. With the exception of the tradition that Krishna's bones were placed in the image of Jagannāth, and another teaching that Vishnu cut the body of Śiva into fifty-one parts, each of which is now enshrined, we have no record of relics being preserved by

Burnouf, quoted by Max Müller, 'Chips,' i. 2

But the Buddhists profess to have most carefully preserved p[illegible] of their great leader, and it was to enshrine these that Dagob[illegible] were built; a representation of one of the most celebrated of these in Ceylon is given at page 189. One of Buddha's teeth is believed to be preserved in it; in others a single hair is said to be preserved. These Dagobas are not themselves used as temples, though in some cases they form part of buildings that have been used for worship.

10. THE KALKI AVATĀRA.

This incarnation, unlike those already described, has yet to be made; it is the expression of a hope that he who has so frequently visited the earth to restore order and happiness will come again to inaugurate a reign of universal goodness, peace, and prosperity. When Vishnu in the form of Krishna reascended to heaven, the Fourth or Kāli Yuga commenced, which, as its name implies, is an age of impurity and dissension. In the 'Vishnu Purāna' the character of this age is vividly described in words that seem prophetic. At its termination Vishnu is expected to come again, bearing the name Kalki, to put an end to wickedness, and establish a kingdom of righteousness similar to the First or Kritā Yuga—the age of Truth. These four ages, in the same order and with the same characteristics, will again and again be experienced until the final end of all things shall come. The following extract

KALKI.

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[illegible] the 'Vishnu Purāṇa' will give an idea of the evils of the present age, which Kalki is to remove.

In Magadha a sovereign named Viswasphatika will establish tribes; extirpate the Kshattriya race; elevate fishermen, barbarians, Brāhmans, and other castes to power; whilst Sudras, outcasts, and barbarians will be masters of the Indus, Darvika, Chandrabhāgā, and Kashmir. "The kings will be 'of churlish spirit, violent temper, and ever addicted to falsehood and wickedness. They will inflict death on women, children, and cows; they will seize the property of subjects, be of limited power, and will, for the most part, rapidly rise and fall; their lives will be short, their desires insatiable, and they will display but little piety. The people of various countries intermingling with them will follow their example; and the barbarians being powerful in the patronage of princes, whilst purer tribes are neglected, the people will perish. Wealth and piety will decrease day by day, until the world shall be wholly depraved. Property alone will confer rank, wealth will be the only source of devotion, passion will be the sole bond of union between the sexes, falsehood will be the only means of success in litigation, and women will be objects merely of sensual gratification. Earth will be venerated only for its mineral treasures (*i.e.* no spot will be peculiarly sacred); the Brāhmanical thread will constitute a Brāhman; external types will be the only distinctions of the several orders of life, dishonesty will be the universal means of subsistence, weakness will be the cause of dependence, menace and presumption will be the subterfuge for learning, liberality will be devotion, simple ablution will be purification, [illegible] will be made from the impulse of ordinary feeling, not in connexion with religious rites or as an act of devotion, and ablution will be performed for pleasure or comfort, not religiously with prescribed ceremonies and prayers). Mutual assent will be marriage, fine clothes will be dignity, and water afar off will be esteemed a holy spring. The people unable to bear the heavy burdens imposed upon them by their avaricious sovereigns

will take refuge among the valleys, and will be glad to feed upon wild honey, herbs, roots, fruits, flowers, and leaves; their only covering will be the bark of trees, and they will be exposed to cold and wind, and sun and rain. No man's life will exceed three-and-twenty years. Thus in the Kali Age shall decay flourish, until the human race approaches annihilation.' It is rather strange that the condition of men in which appeared to the writer of this Purana as the most miserable he could imagine, where their dress was bark and their food consisted of roots and fruits, was in the earliest ages regarded as the most desirable. It was this the old Rishis lived, who are held in the greatest esteem.

"When the practices taught by the Vedas and the institutes of law shall nearly have ceased, and the close of the Kali Age shall be nigh, a portion of that divine being who exists of his own spiritual nature in the character of Brahma, and who is the beginning and the end, and who comprehends all things, shall descend upon the earth. He will be born in the family of Vishnuyasas, an eminent Brahman of Sambhal village, as Kalki, endowed with the eight superhuman faculties. By his irresistible might he will destroy all the Mlechchhas (outcasts), thieves, and all whose minds are devoted to iniquity. He will then re-establish righteousness upon earth; and the minds of those who live at the end of the Kali Age shall be awakened and be made pellucid as crystal. The men who are changed in virtue of that particular time shall be as the seeds of human beings, and shall give birth to a race who shall follow the laws of the Krita Age, or Age of Purity."

In the descriptions of Kalki, and in pictures, he is represented as a white man riding upon or bowing down before a white horse, and with a sword in his hand: he is the purifier of the present degenerate age, and the restorer of purity and goodness.

JAGANNÁTH.

This deity is not reckoned as one of the Avatāras of Vishnu in the Purānic lists; but though tradition declares him to be an appearance of Vishnu himself, and not the incarnation of a portion of his essence, there is considerable reason for doubting whether originally Jagannāth—the Lord of the World—had any connexion with Vishnu; the probability being that he was the local divinity of some now unknown tribe, whose worship was engrafted into Hinduism; and the new god when admitted into the Pantheon was regarded as another manifestation of Vishnu. There are several legends professing to account for the form in which he is worshipped, and for the peculiar sanctity of Puri, the chief place of his worship. There is a peculiarity too in the phraseology employed by the people who visit his shrine: they speak of going to see Jagannāth, not to worship him; and it is the sight of the image as he is being bathed, or drawn in his ponderous car, that is so eagerly desired as a means by which sin in the worshipper is destroyed.

Professor Goldstücker* gives the following legend from the Ain-i-Akbari, in which some of the ordinary notions of the people respecting Jagannāth are described. A king desirous of founding a city sent a learned Brahman to select a proper site. The Brahman after a long search reached the sea-shore, and there saw a crow diving into the water, which having washed its body made obeisance to the sea. Understanding the language

* Chambers's Cyclopædia, s. v.

of birds he learned from the crow that if he remained there a short time, he would comprehend the wonders of the land. The king, apprised of this occurrence, built a large city, with a temple on the spot near where the crow had appeared. One night the Rāja in a dream heard a voice saying to him: "On a certain day cast thine eyes on the sea-shore, when there will arise from the water a piece of wood 52 in. long and 18 in. broad: this is the true form of the deity: take it up and keep it hidden in thine house seven days, and in whatever shape it shall then appear, place it in the temple and worship it." The Rāja acted upon the advice given to him in this dream; and, when he had set up the image received from the sea, called it Jagannāth, which performed many miracles, and became the object of worship of all ranks of people.

Ward * gives a somewhat fuller account. When Krishna was accidentally shot by the hunter Jara, his bones were left by him to rot under the tree where he died, until some pious person collected them and placed them in a box, where they remained, until Indradimumna, a king who was earnestly striving to propitiate Vishnu, was directed to form an image and place in it these bones, with the assurance that he would afterwards obtain great reward for his religious deeds. When Indradhumna wished to follow his advice, he prayed to Visvakarma to assist him by making the image; the architect of the gods consented to do this, but was most careful in explaining to the king that if any one looked at him, or in any way disturbed him whilst he was at work, he would immediately desist, and leave the image in an unfinished state. The king at once promised to observe this condition, and Visvakarma commenced his work. In one night he raised a grand temple in the blue mountains of Orissa, and was working at the image in the temple, when after restraining his impatience for fifteen days, the king foolishly tried to see the god at work, who at once discontinued, as he had said, and the image was left with a most ugly face, and without hands or feet. The king, being exceedingly grieved as he saw the result of his curiosity, went in his distress to Brahmā, who comforted him with

* Vol. i. 163.

promise that he would render the image famous in its present form. The king invited the gods to be present at its consecration; Brahma himself officiated as priest, gave eyes and a soul to the god; and thus the fame of Jagannāth was completely established. The original image of this deity is closely copied in other places besides Puri; by his side there is generally an image of Krishna's favourite brother Balarāma, and his sister Subhadrā.

The following is translated from a Bengali account of Jagannāth:—Nārāyana (Vishnu) and his wife having taken up their abode in the blue mountains of Orissa, where he was known by the name of Nilmādhava, was visited by great numbers of gods and men, and the neighbourhood obtained the name of Mokshya-kshetra (the field of emancipation from births). A king named Indradhumna, a son of the Sun, a devout worshipper of Vishnu, being anxious to pay a visit to Nilmādhava, before starting, sent Vidyapati, the brother of his family priest, to learn the way to Orissa, that he might act as guide; who on his return gave such an account of all that he had seen that the king was more anxious to go than ever. Having made his arrangements, taking his family with him, the king went under the guidance of Vidapati, but was most grievously disappointed to learn on his arrival there, that the god had withdrawn himself from public gaze. As he cried with sorrow and vexation, a voice from the sky reached his ear: "As you cannot see Nilmādhava, make a wooden image and worship that; Nārāyana will inhabit it, and by the sight of the image you and others will obtain final emancipation." The king followed this advice; as he was preparing to make the image, Nārāyana himself, in the form of an old Brāhman named Visvakarma, came and offered to form the image in fifteen days. The offer was accepted, and within the specified time the image of Jagannāth, with those of his brother and sister, was made.

The peculiarity of the worship of Jagannāth is that his image is not only worshipped in its proper temple, but three days each year is exposed to public view. On the first of these days, called the Suān jattra (Bathing Festival), the idol is taken from its shrine, and on a lofty platform, in sight of vast multitudes

bathed by the priests. This exposure is supposed to be productive of a cold, so that, ten days later, the Rath-jattra (Car Festival) is held; when the image is placed in an immense car made and reserved expressly for this purpose, and taken to the temple of any god which happens to be near, for a change of air. The car is drawn by the excited crowd; the poorer and more ignorant people believing that it is a meritorious act to assist in dragging it. After remaining a week in this place, the third festival (the Return) is held, at which, with somewhat diminished fervour, the idol is dragged back to its home. Puri is the place where it is believed this deity is seen with greater benefit to the worshippers; but it is considered that there is almost as much religious merit obtained by seeing and assisting to draw his car in places nearer home. Every town and almost every large village has its own car; and with the promise of so desirable a gift—salvation from sin—it is not to be wondered at that there should be a great wish to see this deity.

CHAITANYA.

Chaitanya is commonly believed by his followers to have been an incarnation of Vishnu; and as he lived in historical times, about 300 years ago, it is interesting to notice how a human being came to be regarded as divine. He is worshipped in Nadiya in Bengal, and it is a singular fact that at his shrine there is a very small image of Krishna, of whom he was a disciple and apostle, whilst the image of Chaitanya is large and conspicuous. The Hindus say that, amongst the many incarnations of Vishnu, four are most important. The first, in the Satya-yuga, called the Suklavarna (the white), was Ananta; the second, in the Treta-yuga, called the Raktavarna (the red), was that of Kapiladeva; the third, in the Dwārpara-yuga, called the Krishnavarna (the black), was Krishna; and the last, in the Kali-yuga, called the Pitavarna (the yellow), was Chaitanya.

The founder of the sect, of which Chaitanya was the most illustrious member, was a Brāhman named Adaitya, who lived at Santipore in Bengal. Another leader, named Nityananda, was

[illegible] at Nadiya a short time before Chaitanya. Chaitanya's father was a Brāhman, named Jagannāth Misra; his mother's name was Suchi; their first son, Visvambhara, was a religious mendicant. When their renowned son was born, his mother was rather old, and as her child seemed weak, in accordance with a custom which prevailed in those times, he was hung in a basket on a tree to die. Adaitya happening to pass by the house as the child lay in the basket, and imagining that he might be the incarnation of deity he was expecting, and which he had foretold, wrote with his foot in the soft earth the incantation employed at the initiation of a disciple into the mysteries of the worship of Krishna. The mother receiving this incantation took the child down from the tree, who immediately took kindly to his food, which he had before neglected, and showed signs of strength and vigour.

Chaitanya made great progress in learning; at sixteen he married Vishnupriyā, with whom he lived until he was forty-four years of age, when he was persuaded by Adaitya and other mendicants to renounce his *poitā* (Brāhmanical thread) and join them in their religious life. Leaving home, parents and wife, he went to Benares, and many thought him guilty of a great crime in forsaking a large family that was dependent upon him for support. On his arrival at that city, he began to form a new sect, or perhaps it would be more correct to say that, as he still called them Vaishnavas, or the followers of Vishnu, he induced those who were followers of other gods to join in the worship of Krishna. The main tenets of his teaching were these: that men should renounce a secular life, and spend their time in visiting shrines; abandon the distinctions of caste and eat freely with all who joined their sect, whatever their caste might be; honour the name of Vishnu, and exercise *bhakti* (or trust) in that god as the means of salvation. He allowed widows to remarry; forbade the eating of flesh and fish, and the worshipping of those deities to whom animal sacrifices were offered; and further, that his disciples should not hold fellowship with those who offered such sacrifices. It is a curious coincidence that about the same time that Luther was preaching salvation by faith in

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Europe, Chaitanya in India was giving prominence to the th[illegible] that salvation was to be obtained through faith (*bhakti*) in Krishna.

From Benares Chaitanya went to Puri, the great shrine of *Jagannāth*, where he proclaimed his doctrines to the many pilgrims he met there; and whilst there, it is said that he obtained four additional arms. Adaitya and Nityananda remained for some years in Benares doing similar work; but after a time they returned to the secular state, and their descendants are greatly respected by the members of this sect. It is reckoned that about one-fifth of the Hindus of Bengal are followers of this teacher. Immoral women generally profess to be his disciples, as, being expelled from their own caste, it is only by this means that they can obtain funeral rites.

KAMADEVA.

Kamadeva, the Indian Cupid, is generally regarded as the son of Vishnu and Lakshmi, under the forms of Krishna and Rukmini, but he is also described in some places as a son of Brahmā. The latter account of his origin arises probably from the following. In the 'Rig-Veda,'* Kāma is described as the first movement that arose in the *One*, after it had come into life through the power of fervour or abstraction. In the 'Atharva-Veda,' this Kāma or desire, not of sexual enjoyment, but of good in general, is celebrated as a great power superior to all the gods, and is supplicated for deliverance from enemies. According to one hymn in the 'Rig-Veda,' Kāma is worshipped and said to be unequalled by the

KĀMADEVA.

* Muir, O. S. T., v. 402.

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according to another, he is the god of sexual love, like Eros of the Greeks, and Cupid of the Latins. In the latter aspect he is thus addressed: "May Kāma, having well directed the arrow, which is winged with pain, barbed with longing, and has desire for its shaft, pierce thee in the heart." And it is in this character that he appears in the Purānas.

Kāma is known in Hindu Mythology as the victim of Siva's anger. A demon named Tāraka, having greatly distressed the

SIVA SLAYING KAMADEVA.

gods, it was said that only a son of Siva could deliver them; but in consequence of his intense grief at the loss of his wife Sati, Siva had become insensible to love. The gods therefore instigated Kāma to wound him with his arrows, and at last his efforts proved successful, just as Pārvati (Sati in a new form) was near, who at once captivated the stricken deity. Angry with Kāma for his presumption, he caused a flame to issue from his third eye, which consumed to ashes the god who had

interrupted his devotions. In the 'Vamana Purana'* is a long account of the effect of Kāma's arrows on Siva. The god thus wounded could find no rest. He threw himself in the Kalinda river, but "the waters were dried up and changed into blackness, and ever since its dark stream, though holy, has flown through the forest like the string that binds a maiden's hair." And as he wandered about from place to place, the wives of the saints in the forest of Daruvanam forsook their homes and followed him. This led their husbands to curse Siva, who, being enraged at the evil Kāma had done to him, consumed him.

The Bhāgavata† continues the story as follows:—Rati, the wife of Rāma, being almost mad with grief at the loss of her husband, entreated Pārvati to intercede with Siva, that he might restore him to life. Pārvati encourages her by showing how her wish will be gratified. "He will be born as the son of Sri Krishna, and his name will be Pradyumna. A demon named Sambara will carry him off and cast him into the sea. Having entered the body of a fish, he will appear in the food of Sambara. Go and take up your abode in the house of Sambara, and when your husband arrives, take him and bring him up; eventually he will slay Sambara, and will live happily with you." Acting on this advice, Rati became a servant in the house of the demon.

From the 'Vishnu Purāna'‡ we gather the completion of this story: When Pradyumna was but six days old, he was stolen from the lying-in chamber by Sambara, terrible as death; for the demon knew (having been told by the sage Nārada) that Pradyumna, if he lived, would be his destroyer. Sambara cast him into the sea, the haunt of the huge creatures of the deep. A large fish swallowed the child, but he died not, and was born again from his body: for that fish was caught by the fishermen, and delivered by them to the great Asura, Sambara. His wife Mayadevi [the Bhāgavata says, servant], the mistress of his household, superintended the operations of the cooks, and, when the fish was cut open, saw a beautiful child.

* Kennedy 'Hindu Myth.' † Ibid. ‡ Page 574.

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whilst she was wondering who this could be, and how it came there, Nārada came to satisfy her curiosity, and said to the graceful dame: "This is the son of him by whom the whole world is created and destroyed; the son of Vishnu, who was stolen by Sambara from the lying-in chamber, and tossed by him into the sea, where he was swallowed by the fish. He is now in thy power; do thou, beautiful woman, tenderly rear the jewel of mankind." Thus counselled by Nārada, Māyādevi took charge of the boy, and carefully reared him from childhood, being fascinated by the beauty of his person. The affection became still more impassioned when he was decorated with the bloom of adolescence. The gracefully-moving Māyādevi, then fixing her heart and eyes upon the high-minded Pradyumna, gave him, whom she regarded as herself, all her magic and illusive arts.

"Observing these marks of passionate affection, the son of Krishna said to the lotus-eyed Māyādevi: 'Why do you indulge in feelings so unbecoming the character of a mother?' To which she replied: 'Thou art not a son of mine; thou art the son of Vishnu, whom Kāla Sambara carried away and threw into the sea; thou wast swallowed by a fish, but wast rescued by me from its belly. Thy fond mother is still weeping for thee.' When this valiant Pradyumna heard this, he was filled with wrath, and defied Sambara to battle. In the conflict the son of Madhava slew the hosts of Sambara. Seven times he foiled the delusions of the enchanter, and, making himself master of the eighth, turned it against Sambara and killed him. By the same faculty he ascended into the air, and proceeded to his father's house, where he alighted, along with Māyavati, in the inner apartments. When the women beheld Pradyumna, they thought it was Krishna himself. Rukmini, her eyes dimmed with tears, spoke tenderly to him, and said: 'Happy is she who has a son like this, in the bloom of youth. Such would be the age of my Pradyumna, if he were alive. Who is the fortunate mother adorned by thee? And yet from thy appearance, and from the affection I feel for thee, thou art assuredly the son of Hari.'

"At this moment Krishna and Nārada arrived; and the latter said to Rukmini: 'This is thine own son, who has come hither

after killing Sambara, by whom when an infant he was stolen. This is the virtuous Mayavati, his wife, and not the wife of Sambara. Hear the reason. When Manmatha (Kāma), the deity of love, perished, the goddess of beauty, desirous to secure his revival, assumed a delusive form, and by her charms fascinated the demon Sambara, and exhibited herself to him in various illusory enjoyments. This thy son is the descended Kāma; and this is the goddess Rati his wife.'"

Kāma is usually represented as a beautiful youth, holding in his hands a bow and arrows of flowers. He travels about through the three worlds accompanied by his wife Rati, the cuckoo, the humming-bee, spring personified, and gentle breezes. Although in Bengal no images are made to represent him, he is worshipped at the time of marriage, and happiness in the married state and offspring are sought for from him. And part of the hymn referred to above from the 'Atharva-Veda' is contained in the Hindu marriage ritual.

Kāma has many names indicative of the influence he is supposed to exert amongst men. Amongst others may be mentioned:—

Madan, "He who intoxicates with love."
Manmatha, "He who agitates the mind."
Māra, "He who wounds."
Tradyumna, "He who conquers all."
Ananga, "He who is without a body."
Kushumesu, "He whose arrows are flowers."

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CHAPTER VI.

SIVA.

Siva is the third person of the Hindu Triad. As Brahmā was Creator, Vishnu Preserver, in order to complete the system, as all things are subject to decay, a Destroyer was necessary; and destruction is regarded as the peculiar work of Siva. This seems scarcely in harmony with the form by which this deity is represented, but it must be remembered that, according to the teaching of Hinduism, death is not death in the sense of passing into non-existence, but simply a change into a new form of life. He who destroys, therefore, causes beings to assume new phases of existence—the Destroyer is really a re-Creator; hence the name Siva, the Bright or Happy One, is given to

SIVA.

which certainly would not have been the case had he been designated as the destroyer in the ordinary meaning of that term.

In the later Hinduism, as taught in the Epics and Puranas, Siva plays a most important part, several books having been written for the special purpose of celebrating his praise; yet his name even, as that of a god, does not occur in the Vedas. But in order to gain for him greater reverence amongst men, he is declared to be the Rudra of the Vedas. In some passages in the Vedas, Rudra is identified with Agni, yet "the distinctive epithets applied to Rudra in the Rig-Veda appear sufficiently to prove that he was generally discriminated from Agni by his early worshippers."*

"Between the texts from the Brāhmanas relative to Rudra and the earliest descriptions of the same deity which we discover in the Epic poems, a wide chasm intervenes, which, as far as I am aware, no genuine ancient materials exist for bridging over. The Rudra of the Mahābhārata is not indeed very different in his general character from the god of the same name who is portrayed in the Satarudriya, but in the later literature his importance is immensely increased, his attributes are more clearly defined, and the conceptions entertained of his person are rendered more distinct by the addition of various additional features and illustrated by numerous legends. Instead of remaining a subordinate deity, as he was in the Vedic Age, Rudra has thrown Agni, Vāyu, Surya, Mitra, and Varuna completely into the shade; and although Indra still occupies a prominent place in the Epic legends, he has sunk down into a subordinate position, and is quite unable to compete in power and dignity with Rudra, who, together with Vishnu, now engrosses the almost exclusive worship of the Brāhmanical world." †

In the following texts from the Vedas,‡ referring to *Rudra*, will be seen the germs of some of the legends found in the later books concerning Siva:—"What can we utter to Rudra, the intelligent, the strong, the most bountiful, which shall be most pleasant to his heart, that so Aditi may bring Rudra's healing

* Müll. O. S. T., iv. 404. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid. iv. 369 ff.

to our cattle and men, and kine, and children.' We seek from Rudra, the lord of songs, the lord of sacrifices, who possesses healing remedies, his auspicious favour; from him who is *brilliant* as the sun, who shines like gold, who is the best and most bountiful of the gods." "We invoke with obeisance the ruddy boar of the sky, with spirally braided hair, a brilliant form." "Far be from us thy cow-slaying and man-slaying weapon." In the same hymn Rudra is called the father of the Maruts or Storm-gods, to explain which the commentator introduces a legend of a later date which is found in the account of the Maruts. (Part I. chap. vii.) In another hymn Rudra is thus addressed: "Thou fitly holdest arrows and a bow; fitly thou [wearest] a glorious necklace of every form [of beauty]." The name Siva may have been connected with Rudra from a verse in the Vājasaneyi recension of the white Yajur Veda wherein Rudra is thus addressed: "Thou art gracious (Siva) by name." Other epithets which are afterwards extended into legends, are seen in a prayer in the same Veda: "Shine upon us, dweller in the mountain, with that blessed body of thine which is auspicious." † "May he who glides away, blue-necked and red-coloured, be gracious unto us." "Reverence to the blue-necked, to the thousand-eyed, to the bountiful, and to the lord of spirits, and to the lord of thieves."

In the following account of Rudra's birth, he is identified with Agni:—"The lord of beings was a householder, and Ushas (The Dawn) was his wife. A boy was born (to them) in a year. The boy wept. Prajāpati said to him, 'Boy, why dost thou weep, since thou hast been born after toil and austerity?' The boy said: 'My evil has not been taken away, and a name has not been given to me. Give me a name.' Prajāpati said, 'Thou art Rudra.' Inasmuch as he gave him that name, Agni became his form, for Rudra is Agni. He was Rudra because he wept (from *rud*, to weep)." ‡ This account of the birth of Rudra agrees with that of the Vishnu and Markandeya Purānas, and to some extent with that of others.

* Muir, O. S. T., iv. 322. † Ibid. p. 325. ‡ Ibid. iv. 54.

It is impossible to give a connected account of the life of this deity. His career has not a definite character like an Avatāra of Vishnu, where it was possible to give a history of his birth, life, and death; though he often appeared on earth in human form, and dwelt frequently at his favourite city, Benares, his home being at Kailasa on the Himālayas. All that can be done is to give a few of the many legends found in the sacred books, in which his character and works are described, by which we may learn the idea of the age in which they were written respecting Siva.

Rudra, according to the Rāmāyana, married Umā, the daughter of Daksha, who appears in various stages of the life of Siva as Pārvati, Durga, Kāli, &c. Fearing that the children of such parents would be most dangerous to live with, the gods entreated Siva and Umā to live a life of chastity; to this they consented, but the request came too late to prevent the birth of Kartikeya. Umā then declared that the wives of all the gods should be childless. Rudra took a prominent position amongst the gods at the churning of the ocean; he drank the poison as nectar that was produced before the Amrita, which caused his neck to become dark-coloured,—hence one of his names is Nilkanta, "the blue-necked."

As Umā was sitting with her husband in their home on Mount Kailasa, seeing the gods pass by in their chariots, she was told that they were proceeding, at her father's invitation, to take part in a great sacrifice that he was about to make. As Siva had offended him, he was not invited by his father-in-law. The 'Bhāgavata Purāna' * gives the cause of this slight upon Siva: "On one occasion the gods and Rishis were assembled at a sacrifice celebrated by the Prājāpatis. On Daksha's entrance, all rose to salute him excepting his father Brahmā and Mahādeva (Siva). Daksha, after making his obeisance to Brahmā, sat down by his command, but was offended at the treatment he received from Siva. Seeing him previously seated, Daksha did not brook this want of respect; but looking at him obliquely with his eyes, as if consuming him, thus spake: 'Hear me, ye Brāhman Rishis,

* Muir, O. S. T., iv. 378 ff.

with the gods and the Ṛṣis, while I, neither from ignorance nor passion, describe what is the practice of virtuous persons. But this shameless being (Siva) detracts from the reputation of the guardians of the world—he by whom, stubborn as he is, the course pursued by the good is transgressed. He assumed the position of my disciple, inasmuch as, like a virtuous person, in the face of Brāhmans and of fire, he took the hand of my daughter who resembled Savitri. This monkey-eyed [god] after having taken the hand of [my] fawn-eyed [daughter], has not even by word shown suitable respect to me, whom he ought to have risen and saluted. Though unwilling, I yet gave my daughter to this impure and proud abolisher of rites and demolisher of barriers, like the word of a Veda to a Sudra. He roams about in dreadful cemeteries, attended by hosts of ghosts and sprites, like a madman, naked, with dishevelled hair, wearing a garland of dead men's [skulls] and ornaments of human bones, pretending to be Siva (auspicious), but in reality Asiva (inauspicious), insane, beloved by the insane, the lord of bhūtas (spirits), beings whose nature is essentially darkness. To this wicked-hearted lord of the infuriate, whose purity has perished, I have, alas! given my virtuous daughter, at the instigation of *Brahmā*.' Having thus reviled Siva, who did not oppose him, *Daksha*, having touched water, incensed, began to curse him: 'Let this Bhava (Siva), lowest of the gods, never at the worship of the gods receive any portion along with the gods Indra, Upendra (Vishṇu), and others.'

"Daksha then left the assembly. After his departure a follower of Mahādeva pronounced a curse upon him, and the Brāhmans who sympathised with him: 'Let Daksha, brutal, be excessively devoted to women, and have speedily the head of a goat. Let this stupid being continue to exist in this world in ceremonial ignorance.' Upon this, Bhrigu (a brother of Daksha, and a Rishi) launched a counter-curse upon the followers of Siva: 'Let those who practise the rites of Bhava be heretics and opponents of the Scriptures. Having lost their purity, deluded in understanding, wearing matted hair and ashes and the initiation of Siva, in which spirituous

figures are the deity." Hearing this imprecation, Śiva and his followers left the assembly, while Daksha and the other Prajāpatis,* celebrated for a thousand years the sacrifice in which Vishṇu was the object of veneration."

The enmity thus commenced between Śiva and Dākṣha continued; and in consequence, at the great sacrifice made when he was appointed chief of the Prajāpatis by Brahmā, Śiva was not invited, and Umā was greatly grieved, as her husband told her, "The former practice of the gods has been that in all sacrifices no portion should be divided to me. By custom, established by the earliest arrangement, the gods lawfully allot me no share in the sacrifice." The Mahābhārata then says that Śiva goes with his attendants, and puts an end to the sacrifice, which, taking the form of a deer, is followed by Śiva into the sky. A drop of perspiration falls from his forehead, from which a fire proceeds, out of which a formidable being is born, Jvara (Fever), which burns up the other things prepared for the sacrifice, and puts to flight the gods. Brahmā now appears to Śiva, promises that the gods shall henceforth give Śiva a share in the sacrifices, and proposes that Jvara shall be allowed to range over the earth.

The Bhāgavata† gives a more lengthy and different account of the termination of Daksha's sacrifice. Satī (Umā) was most anxious to attend her father's sacrifice, and though her husband tried to dissuade her, she "disregards his warning and goes; but, being slighted by her father, reproaches him for his hostility to her husband, and threatens to abandon the corporeal frame by which she was connected with her parent. She then voluntarily gives up the ghost. Seeing this, Śiva's attendants, who had followed her, rush on Daksha to slay him. This is prevented, and Śiva's followers are put to flight; but when Śiva heard of Satī's death, being greatly angered, "from a lock of his hair which he tore out, a gigantic demon arose (named Virabhadra), whom he commanded to destroy Daksha and his sacrifice."

* The Prajāpatis, seven, ten, or twenty-one in number, according to various authorities, are the fathers of the human race.

This was accomplished; for he plucked out Bhaga's beard, tore out Bhaga's eyes, knocked out Pushan's teeth, and cut off Daksha's head. In their distress, the gods, resorting to Brahma for advice, are advised to propitiate Siva, to accomplish which they resort to Kailasa, where they see Siva "carrying the linga desired by devotees, ashes, a staff, a tuft of hair, an antelope's skin, and a digit of the moon, his body shining like an evening cloud." Siva in part relents, and allows Daksha to have a goat's head; the sacrifice is completed, and Vishnu gives an address in which he shows that he is the supreme deity, and that the troubles of his worshippers arise from imagining themselves to be different from him. Daksha worships Siva, and Uma, who had voluntarily given up herself to the flames, and thus become a *Sati*, was re-born as Pārvati, being the daughter of Himavat, the god of the Himālayas and Menā.

Siva adopted the garb and lived the life of an ascetic, and though generally worshipped under the form of the Linga he is represented in human form, living in the Himālayas along with Pārvati, sometimes in the act of trampling on or destroying demons, wearing round his black neck a serpent and a necklace of skulls, and furnished with a whole apparatus of external emblems, such as a white bull on which he rides, a trident, tiger's skin, elephant's skin, rattle, noose, &c. He has three eyes, one being in his forehead, in allusion either to the three Vedas, or time past, present, and future. He has a crescent on his forehead, the moon having been given to him as his share of the products of the churning of the ocean. Again Mahadeva, or the great deity Siva, is sometimes connected with humanity in another personification, very different from that just noted, viz. that of an austere ascetic, with matted hair, living in a forest and teaching men by his own example, first, the power to be obtained by penance (*tapas*), mortification of the body, and suppression of the passions; and, secondly, the great virtue of abstract meditation, as leading to the loftiest spiritual knowledge, and ultimately to union or actual identification with the great spirit of the universe."*

* 'Indian Wisdom,' p. 335.

The following legend from the *Vāmana Purāna* describes the ordinary life of Śiva as an ascetic. Devī (Pārvatī), oppressed with violent heat, thus addressed her lord: "O Lord! the heat increases in violence: hast thou no house to which we might repair, and there abide, protected from the wind, the heat, the cold?" Śaṅkara replied: "I am, O lovely One, without a shelter, a constant wanderer in forests." Having thus spoken, Śaṅkara with Satī remained during the hot season under the shade of trees; and when it was passed, the rainy season with its dark clouds succeeded. On beholding which, Satī said to Śiva: "Heart-agitating winds do blow, O Maheshwara, and rushing torrents roar; let me entreat thee to build a house on Kailāsa, where I may abide with thee in comfort." Śiva replied: "O my beloved, I have no riches for the erection of a house, nor am I possessor of aught else than an elephant's skin for a garment, and serpents for my ornaments." The soul of Śiva, having heard these harsh words, seemingly true, but devoid of truth, was alarmed, and looking on the ground with bashfulness and anger, said: "Then say, O Śāmbhu, how can we pass in comfort the rainy season under the shade of trees?" Śiva replied: "With our bodies covered with a cloud, O lovely One, and the rainy season pass without any rain falling on thy tender frame." Having thus spoken, Hara (Śiva) stopped a cloud, and with the daughter of Dakṣha, fixed his abode within it, and hence has he since been celebrated in heaven under the name of Megha-Kīla (he whose banner is a cloud). When the rains were over, they took up their abode on Mount Mandara.

The home life of Śiva and his spouse does not appear to have been of the happiest. As they could each bestow gifts upon their worshippers, it sometimes happened that the one wanted to bless those whom the other wished to curse. In the Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata† is an account of a dispute between them in connexion with the struggle between Rāma and Rāvaṇa. In the earlier part of the contest, Rāma being unable to overthrow his enemy because of the assistance afforded him by Śiva, the

* Hindu Myth., p. 293. † Wards, ii. 199.

gods whom Rāvaṇa had oppressed went, with Rāma at their head, to ask Śiva to withdraw his help. Śiva consented to accompany them on the seventh day of the conflict, to witness the destruction of their foe. Durgā (Pārvatī) severely reproached her husband, asking how he could witness the destruction of his own worshipper, a worshipper who had stood praying to him in the most sultry weather surrounded by four fires; who had continued his devotions in the chilling cold, standing in water, and had persevered in his applications standing on his head, amid torrents of rain. She then poured forth a torrent of abuse, calling him a withered old man, who smoked intoxicating herbs, lived in cemeteries and covered himself with ashes, and asked if he thought she would accompany him on such an errand. Śiva now gets angry, and reminds his wife that she was only a woman and therefore could know nothing, and further that she does not act like a woman, because she wandered about from place to place, engaged in war, was a drunkard, spent her time in the company of degraded beings, killed giants, drank their blood, and hung their skulls around her neck. Durgā became so enraged at these reproaches, that the gods were frightened and entreated Rāma to join them in supplication to her, or Rāvaṇa would never be destroyed. He did so; she became propitious, and consented to the destruction of the demon. Durgā is represented in the Śivopākhyāna as being exceedingly jealous because her husband, in his begging excursions, visited the quarters of the town inhabited by women of ill-fame, and in the Rāmāyaṇa is on account of a terrible quarrel between them because Paraśurāma beat Kārtikeya and Gaṇeśa.

In the 'Vāmana Purāṇa'[1] is a legend explaining why Śiva adopted the dress and habits of a religious mendicant. Formerly, when all things had been destroyed, and nought remained but the vast ocean, that lord who is incomprehensible (Brahma) reposed in slumber for a thousand years. When the night had passed, desirous of creating the three worlds, the skilled in the Veda, investing himself with the quality of impurity, assumed

[1] Kennedy, 'Hindu Myth.,' p. 98.

a corporeal form with five heads (Brahmā). Then also was produced from the quality of darkness another form with three eyes and twisted locks, and bearing a rosary and a trident. Brahmā next created Ahankara (consciousness of individual existence), which immediately pervaded the nature of both gods; and under its influence Rudra said to Brahmā, "Say, O lord, how camest thou hither, and by whom wert thou created?" Brahmā asks in return, "And where have you come from?" The result is a terrible quarrel, in which Siva, inflamed with anger, cut off the fifth head of Brahmā, which had uttered the boastful words. But when Siva tried to throw the head to the ground, it would not fall, but remained in his hand. Brahmā then created a giant to slay Siva in his weakened state, caused by the sin of injuring Brahmā, the father of Brāhmans, to escape from whom Siva fled to Benares. The particular sanctity of Benares arises from the fact that it was there that Siva became absolved from his sin, and was therefore freed from the dissevered head of Brahmā, which as a penance he was doomed to carry with him wherever he went. It was in his attempt to get free from the sin of Brāhmanicide that Siva became a wandering mendicant.

The ordinary name by which Siva is known is Mahādeva, the 'great god'; the origin of this is taught in the Mahābhārata.[1] The Asuras had a boon bestowed on them by Brahmā, that they should have three castles which should be "destructible only by the deity who should be able to overthrow castles by a single arrow." Owing to this defence, they become most hateful to the other gods, who in their distress, went to Brahmā, who conducts them to Mahādeva. Siva tells them that he alone cannot destroy these castles, but that, with the aid of half his strength, they themselves would be able to overcome their enemies. They answered that they could not sustain half his strength, but proposed that he should undertake the work aided by half their strength. Mahādeva consented to this, and by this means became stronger than all the gods, and was thenceforward called Mahādeva. Notwithstanding this, in the account of Parasurāma

[1] Mūr. O. S. T., iv. 323.

a legend is given in which Vishnu's superiority to Siva is shown, whilst in the Puranas devoted to Siva's praise it is distinctly affirmed that Brahma and Vishnu are inferior to him.

The unity of the various deities is taught in the following legend:—As Lakshmi and Durgâ were sitting together in the

HAR-HARI.

presence of Siva, Lakshmi contended that her husband (Vishnu) was greater than Siva, because Siva had worshipped him. As

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they were conversing Vishnu himself appeared, and, in order to convince his wife that he and Siva were equal, entered the body of Siva, and they became one. Another form of this story is found in the 'Skanda Purāna.'* Siva asked Vishnu on one occasion to assume the form of a beautiful woman, as he did at the churning of the ocean, to attract the attention of the Asuras whilst the gods drank the Amrita. Vishnu consenting to do this, Siva became excited and sought to embrace her. As Vishnu ran away, Siva followed; and though Vishnu resumed his proper form, Siva clasped him so tightly that their bodies became one, and the name Har-Hari is given to the deities thus united.

Siva is always represented as having a third eye, situated in the middle of his forehead; the reason of this peculiarity is given in the Mahābhārata.† As Siva was seated on the Himālayas, where he had been engaged in austerities, Umā, attended by her companions and dressed as an ascetic, came up behind him and playfully put her hands over his eyes. The effect of this was tremendous. Suddenly the world became darkened, lifeless, and destitute of oblations. The gloom, however, was as suddenly dispelled, by a great flame which burst from Mahādeva's forehead, in which a third eye, luminous as the sun, was formed. By the fire of this eye the mountain was scorched, and everything upon it consumed. Umā hereupon stood in a submissive attitude before her husband, when, in a moment, the Himālaya, her father, was restored to his former condition.

Each god is represented as having special fondness for some bird or animal, on which he is supposed to travel, and which therefore is called his Vāhan or vehicle. The bull is Siva's; and the image of Nandi is seen in front of many of the shrines sacred to Mahādeva. Owing probably to this circumstance, a curious custom prevails, similar in many respects to the setting loose of the scapegoat by the Israelites. At the death of a follower of Siva, if his friends are pious and can afford it, they set a bullock loose, and allow it to wander at will. By the Hindus generally

* Ward, ii. 192. † Muir, O. S. T., iv. 299.

it is considered a meritorious act to feed these sacred bulls, and a sin to injure them. In country places many of these animals are to be seen, and they become a great nuisance to the cultivators into whose fields they wander; and though they do much damage, as they have no owner, no compensation can be obtained. If a man were specially devout, or his friends enthusiastic, as many as seven bulls are set loose at his decease. The idea seems to be this: as Siva was delighted with Nandi, he will graciously receive into his presence those on whose behalf these bullocks are given.

As Siva himself lived the life of an ascetic, and practised severe penance, it is believed that a similar life is pleasing to him now; hence many of the Saivites, or followers of Siva, practise great austerities, and resort to cruel rites as a means of gaining his favour. Wandering throughout India are tens of thousands of Sanyasis, or pilgrims, who subsist upon charity and expose themselves to cold and heat, in the belief that their life is pleasing to this deity. Some of them inflict upon themselves great physical pain by retaining their arms or legs in one posture for years; others allow the thumb-nail to grow through their finger; others gaze into the sun until they become blind; others again impose a vow of silence upon themselves, until at length they cannot speak. At certain festivals held in honour of Siva, the lower orders of the people used to swing from bamboos hanging by iron hooks forced into their bodies, whilst others threw themselves from a height upon sharp knives; but at the present time these cruel practices are prohibited by the Government. At these times an intoxicating drug made from hemp is freely indulged in; the authority for this practice being the life of Siva, as described in the Purānas. As Krishna is believed to be pleased with songs and dances, not always of a highly moral character, Siva is believed to delight in the cruel and drunken practices of his ignorant worshippers.

The following extract from the Bhāgavata, descriptive of Siva's appearance and conduct, countenances much that now forms part of Siva's worship. Coming to the conclusion that one of his worshippers was in distress, Siva "assumed half the body of

Parvati fastened [illegible] matted hair, daubed his body over with ashes, ate a large quantity of hemp, swallow-wort, and thorn-apple; and wearing a Brahmanical thread composed of white

SIVA SLAYING AN ASURA.

snakes, clad in an elephant's hide, with a necklace of beads and a garland of skulls, [illegible]ding upon Nandi, accompanied by ghosts, goblins, spectres, witches, imps, sprites and evil spirits, Bholonath came forth. On his forehead was the moon; he placed the

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changes on his head, and his eyes were very red. His most destructive weapon was a trident; with this he slew the foe who was obnoxious to his follower.

Though Siva's appearance is repeatedly described in the Purānas, and in pictures he is often represented in the human form, it is by the Linga that he is almost universally worshipped. This image, from its appearance, does not suggest anything offensive to those unacquainted with its symbolic meaning; and though some writers speak of its being innocuous to the Hindus themselves, it is impossible for any one acquain[illegible] legends which account for its being th[illegible] symbo[illegible] Siva, to see and worship it without [illegible]npure thoughts being suggested by it, it being intended t[illegible]present both the male and female reproductive organs.

Several legends are given to exp[illegible] how the Linga came to be the representative of Siva; the [illegible]bability is that it was an object of worship of some abori[illegible]al tribe, incorporated into Hinduism. The 'Padma Purāna [illegible]eaches that it was the result of a curse pronounced by Bhrigu. When Bhrigu was sent by the sages to discover who of the thr[illegible]gods was the greatest, he came to Siva's abode, and wishing at[illegible]ce to enter was prevented from doing so by a doorkeeper, wh[illegible]formed him that, as his master was with Devi his wife, it [illegible] impossible for him to enter at present. After waiting for [illegible]he time, the sage's patience being exhausted, he said: "Sinc[illegible]hou, O Sankara! hast treated me with contempt, in preferri[illegible]he embraces of Pārvati, your forms of worship shall be the L[illegible] and Yoni."

The Vamana ‡ makes [illegible]he result of a curse pronounced by a number of sages. W[illegible] Sati died at Daksha's sacrifice, Siva wandered about from [illegible]ce to place like a madman, mourning her absence. He tra[illegible]ed from hermitage to hermitage, but could find no rest. W[illegible]n the hermits' wives saw him, they fell in love with him and fol[illegible]ed him from place to place; their husbands

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‡ Ganga, Part III, chap. viii.
‡ [illegible]nedy, 'Hindu Myth.,' p. 301.
‡ [illegible]d. p. 299.

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being [illegible] at this, cursed the god, and by this means deprived him of his manhood. A great commotion through the world followed, so that Brahmā and Vishnu interceded with the hermits on his behalf, who consented to withdraw their curse on condition that Siva should be represented by the Linga; and thus it became an object of worship to gods and men.

As a specimen of the legends by which the worship of Siva under this form is inculcated, I give the following extract from the 'Siva Purāna.'* A Rākshas named Bhima, having obtained [illegible] might as a boon from Rāma, commenced exerting his [illegible]ly-ac[illegible]red po[illegible] we[illegible] by attacking the King of Kāmrupa. Having c[illegible]pered the [illegible]ng, and seized his kingdom and riches, he placed him in chain[illegible]n a solitary prison. The king, being eminently pious, notwi[illegible]anding his confinement, continued daily to make clay figur[illegible] of the Linga, and to worship Siva with all the prescribed r[illegible] and ceremonies. Meanwhile the Rākshas continued his c[illegible]uests, and everywhere abolished religious observances and w[illegible]hip enjoined in the Vedas. The gods being reduced by his [illegible]er to great distress, appealed to Siva for help, and propitiated [illegible] by the worship of clay Lingas. Sāmbhu assured them that h[illegible]ould effect the destruction of their enemy by means of the K[illegible] of Kāmrupa, then a prisoner. At this very moment this king [illegible] engaged in profound meditation before a Linga, when one [illegible] the guards, seeing him thus occupied, went and informed th[illegible] Rākshas that the prisoner was performing some improper cer[illegible]nies in order to injure him. Hearing this, the monster, enraged, [illegible]ed his sword, and hastening to the prison, thus addressed th[illegible]king: "Speak the truth, and tell me who it is that thou wos[illegible]est, and I will not slay thee; otherwise I will instantly put the[illegible] death!"

The king, placing firm reliance on th[illegible]rotection of Siva, undauntedly replied: "In truth, I worship [illegible]nkara; do then what thou pleasest!" The Rākshas asked: "[illegible]at can Sankara do to me? I know him well, that he was once [illegible]iged to become the servant of my uncle (Rāvana); and thou, [illegible]sting in his power,

* Kennedy, 'Hindu Myth.,' p.

didst endeavour to c
attempt. However, u
vincest me of his might, I
king replied: "Vile as I am,
But mighty as he is, I know he
the Rākshas said: "How can that
tion, that wandering mendicant, p
but thy lord appear, and I will immed
battle." He then ordered the attenda
reviling the king, the mighty Rākshas, sn
his sword, said, laughing: "Now behold the p
Scarcely had his sword touched the Linga than
it, and exclaimed: "Behold, I am Iswara (god),
the protection of his worshipper, on whom he al
safety and happiness; now learn to dread my might!
attacked the Rākshas, and, with the glory which issued from
his third eye, consumed him and his army to ashes.

Siva is said to have a thousand names; in addition to those already mentioned the following are most common:—

Maheshwara, "The great god."

Ishwar, "The glorious."

Chandrashekara, "He who wears a half-moon on his forehead."

Bhuteswara, "Lord of Bhuts, or goblins."

Mritunjaya, "He who conquers death."

Srikanta, "He whose neck is beautiful."

Smaruhara, "The destroyer of Smara or Kāmdeva."

Gangadhara, "He who holds Gangā (the Ganges) in his hair."

Sthānu, "The everlasting."

Girisha, "The lord of the hills."

Digaunbara, "He who is clothed with space (naked)."

Bhagavat, "The lord."

Isāna, "The ruler."

Mahākāla, "The great time."

Tryambaka, "The three-eyed."

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he is represented, as his name
ppearance of his body and the
as in his ordinary forms. It is
ers for recovery from sickness are

PANCHANANA

ddressed to Siva as the physician or healer. In places where
there is no temple or image of this deity, worship is offered to
n before a shapeless stone, painted red, placed under a tree.
This is a very common form of worship in the villages of Bengal

There are some shrines of Panchanan that have acquired considerable celebrity, to which women resort to obtain the gift of children and other blessings. In times of sickness offerings are made to this deity without scruple, though the sufferer is not ordinarily a worshipper of Siva. In cases of epilepsy it is the common belief that the victim is possessed by Panchanan, and offerings are made to induce him to depart; and it is believed that recovery is the result of the god's departure.

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CHAPTER VII.

UMĀ.

UMĀ is the name by which the consort of Siva is first known. In the various sacred books she appears in many forms, and is known by many names; but as there are legends giving the circumstances connected with the names and forms more generally known, these will be given as far as possible in chronological order.

When Devi (the goddess) appears as Umā, she is said to be the daughter of Daksha, a son of Brahmā. Her father was at first very unwilling that his daughter should marry a mendicant, but his scruples were overcome by the persuasion of Brahmā. As Siva is styled Mahādeva, Umā is frequently called simply Devi. At this period of her existence she is also called Sati, in allusion to the fact that when her father slighted her husband by not inviting him to the great sacrifice he made, she voluntarily entered the sacrificial fire and was burned to death in the presence of the gods and Brahmans; or, according to another account, was, under the same circumstances, consumed by her own glory. The name Sati means "the true or virtuous woman," and is given to those widows who enter the funeral pile of their husbands, and undergo a voluntary death, by being burned with his corpse. Ambika, another name of Umā, in one of the earliest books, is said to be the sister of Rudra; and yet in the later ones she is declared to be his wife.

The earliest work, so far as I am aware, in which the name of Umā appears, is the Talavakāra, or Kena Upanishad. In the third section of that treatise it is mentioned that on one occasion

Brahmā gained a victory for the gods. As however they were disposed to ascribe the credit of their success to themselves, Brahmā appeared for the purpose of disabusing them of their mistake. The gods did not know him, and commissioned first Agni, and then Vāyu, to ascertain what this apparition was. When, in answer to Brahmā's inquiry, these two gods represented themselves, the one as having power to burn and the other to blow away anything whatever, he desired them to burn and blow away respectively a blade of grass; but they were unable to do this, and returned without ascertaining who he was. Indra was then commissioned to find out whom he could be. 'So be it,' he replied, and approached that being, who vanished from him. In the sky he came to a woman, who was very resplendent, Umā Haimavati. To her he said, 'What is this apparition?' She said, 'It is Brahmā; in this victory of Brahmā exult.' By this he knew that it was Brahmā. The commentators on this passage declare that Umā means 'knowledge,' and speak of Umā as the impersonation of 'divine knowledge.'

Professor Weber† says: "As in Siva, first of all two gods, Agni and Rudra, are combined, so too his wife is to be regarded as a compound of several divine forms; and this becomes quite evident as we look over the mass of her epithets. While one set of these, as Umā, Ambika, Pārvati, Haimavati, belong to the wife of Rudra, others, as Kālī, carry us back to the wife of Agni, while Gauri and others perhaps refer to Nirriti, the goddess of all evil." And he adds: "The most remarkable instance of this is to be found in the Mahābhārata, in the hymn of Yudhishthira to Durgā, where he calls her Yasodā, Krishna, 'born in the cowherd family of Nanda,' 'sister of Vasudeva,' 'enemy of Kansa,' and as 'having the same features as Sankarshana.'" Some such explanation is certainly necessary when we see that Kālī is said to be the same as Umā, the embodiment of "heavenly wisdom."

In the following passage from the Rāmāyana,‡ Umā is said to be the daughter of Himavat and Menā; the two forms of Umā and Pārvati being confounded in the writer's mind. "To

† Muir, O. S. T., iv. 430. † Ibid. iv. 438. ‡ Ibid. iv. 439.

Himavat, the chief of mountains, the great mine of metal, two daughters were born in beauty unequalled upon earth. The daughter of Meru, Menā by name, the pleasing and beloved wife of Himavat, was their slender-waisted mother. Of her was born Gangā, the eldest daughter of Himavat, and his second daughter was Umā, who, rich in austere observances, having undertaken an arduous rite, fulfilled a course of severe austerity. This daughter Umā, distinguished by severe austerity, adored by the worlds, the chief of the mountains gave to the matchless Rudra. These were the two daughters of the king of the mountains; Gangā, the most eminent of rivers, and Umā, the most excellent of goddesses."

The Harivansa* mentions three daughters of Himavat and Menā, but Gangā is not amongst them. "Their (Pitris) mental daughter was Menā, the eminent wife of the great mountain Himavat. The king of the mountains begat three daughters upon Menā, viz. Aparnā, Ekaparnā, and Ekapātala. These three performing very great austerity, such as could not be performed by gods or Dānavas, distressed [with alarm] both the stationary and the moving worlds. Ekaparnā (one leaf) fed upon one leaf. Ekapātala took only one pātala (Bignonia) for her food. One (Aparnā) took no sustenance; but her mother, distressed through maternal affection, forbade her, dissuading her with her words *u mā* (oh don't). The beautiful goddess, performing arduous austerity, having been thus addressed by her mother, became known in the three worlds as Umā. In this manner the contemplative goddess became renowned under that name. All these three had mortified bodies, were distinguished by the force of contemplation, and were all chaste, and expounders of divine knowledge. Umā was the eldest and most excellent of the three. Distinguished by the force derived from deep contemplation, she obtained Mahādeva [for her husband]."

Several of the names under which Umā is now known and worshipped are to be found in the older writings of the Hindus,

* Muir, O. S. T., iv. 432.

though, at that time they did not refer to Siva's wife. Umā, as we have already seen, was "Wisdom;" Ambikā was a sister of Rudra; Durgā "in a hymn of the Taittiriya Āranyaka is an epithet of the sacrificial flame; and Kāli, a word which occurs in the Mandaka Upanishad, is the name of one of the seven flickering tongues of Agni, the god of fire."*

Umā is called the mother of Kartikeya, and in a certain sense of Ganesa too; but it is not at all clear whether it was really as Umā or in her succeeding birth as Pārvati that she had these children.

The 'Kurma Purāna' † has an account of Uma's creation which takes us a stage anterior to her birth as a daughter of Daksha. "When Brahmā was angry with his sons for adopting an ascetic life [and refusing to perpetuate the human race], a form half male and half female was produced from that anger, to whom Brahmā said, 'Divide thyself,' and then disappeared. The male half became Rudra, and the female, at the command of Brahmā, became the daughter of Daksha under the name of Sati, and was given in marriage to Rudra; and when she subsequently gave up her life on being treated with disrespect by her father, she was born a second time as the daughter of Himavat and Menā, and named Pārvati."

It should be noticed that although Umā is called the *wife* of Siva, it is understood that she represents the energy or active power of that deity; she assumed a body in order that she might be united to him in due form: in like manner Vishnu's energy became incarnate in Lakshmi, Sita, &c.

PĀRVATI.

The goddess in this form is the constant companion of her husband, but few independent actions are ascribed to her. In the Puranas Siva and Pārvati are generally represented as engaged in making love to each other, or (rather a singular change) as seated on Mount Kailasa discussing the most abstruse

* Goldstücker, Chambers's Cyclopædia, s. v. U
† Kennedy, 'Hindu Myth.' p. 329.

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questions of Hindu philosophy. Occasionally, however, quarrels arose between them, as *e.g.* when Siva reproached her for the blackness of her skin. This taunt so incensed her that she left

SIVA AND PÂRVATI

him, and, repairing to a deep forest, performed a most severe course of austerities, until Brahmâ granted her as a boon that her complexion should be golden, and from this circumstance she is known as Gauri.*

* Kennedy, 'Hindu Myth.' p. 234.

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The following legend from the 'Varaha Purana'* describes her origin. Brahmā when on a visit to Siva on Mount Kailasa is thus addressed by him: "Say quickly, O Brahmā, what has induced you to come to me?" Brahmā replies: "There is a mighty Asura named Andhaka (Darkness), by whom all the gods, having been distressed, came for protection, and I have hastened to inform you of their complaints." Brahmā then looked intently at Siva, who by thought summoned Vishnu into their presence. As the three deities looked at each other, "from their three refulgent glances sprang into being a virgin of celestial loveliness, of hue cerulean, like the petals of a blue lotus, and adorned with gems, who bashfully bowed before Brahmā, Vishnu, and Siva." On their asking her who she was, and why she was distinguished by the three colours black, white, and red, she said: "From your glances was I produced; do you not know your own omnipotent energies?" Brahmā, then praising her, said: "Thou shalt be named the goddess of three times (past, present, and future), the preserver of the universe, and under various appellations shalt thou be worshipped, as thou shalt be the cause of accomplishing the desires of thy votaries. But, O goddess, divide thyself into three forms, according to the colours by which thou art distinguished." She then, as Brahmā had requested, divided herself into three forms; one white, one red, and one black. The white was "Sarasvati, of a lovely felicitous form, and the co-operator with Brahmā in creation; the red was Lakshmi, the [illegible] of Vishnu, who with him preserves the universe; [illegible] Pārvati endowed with many qualities and the [illegible]. In the preceding legend it was narrated [illegible] ably black, became golden-coloured.

The 'Vaivarta Purana'† relates the [illegible] led to the re-appearance on earth of Umā, [illegible] herself and became a Sati, under the form of [illegible] earing of the death of his wife, fainted from grie[illegible]ry he has tened to the banks of the river of hea[illegible]eheld the body of his beloved Sati, arrayed in [illegible]s, holding

* Kennedy, 'Hindu Myth' p. 209. † Ibid. p. 211.

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rosary in her hand, and glowing with splendour bright as burnished gold. No sooner did he see the lifeless form of his spouse, than, through grief for her loss, his senses forsook him." When he revived, gazing on her beautiful countenance, with tears in his eyes and sorrow in his voice, he thus addressed her: "Arise, arise, O my beloved Sati! I am Sankara, thy lord; look therefore on me, who have approached thee. With thee I am almighty, the framer of all things, and the giver of every bliss; but without thee, my energy! I am like a corpse, powerless and incapable of action: how then, my beloved, canst thou forsake me? With smiles and glances of thine eyes, say something sweet as *amrita*, and with the rain of thy gentle words sprinkle my heart, which is scorched with grief. Formerly, when thou didst see me from a distance, thou wouldst greet me with the fondest accents; why then to-day art thou angry, and wilt not speak to me, thus sadly lamenting? O lord of my soul! arise. O mother of the universe! arise. Dost thou not see me here weeping? O beauteous One! thou canst not have expired. Then, O my faithful spouse! why dost thou not honour me as usual? And why dost thou thus, disobedient to my voice, infringe thy marriage vow?"

"Siva, having thus spoken, raised the lifeless body, and in the anguish of separation pressed it to his bosom, and kissed it again and again. Lip to lip, and breast to breast, Sankara [illegible] corpse of his beloved; and, after frequent faintings, [illegible] sing Sati closely to his bosom, rushed forward [illegible] grief. Like a man deprived of his senses, the [illegible] se wandered over the seven *oceipas*, until [illegible] d anguish, he fell down in a swoon at the foot o[illegible] The gods, seeing Siva in this state, were greatly [illegible] accompanied by Brahmā and Vishnu, hastened [illegible] ere he lay. Vishnu placed the head of the faintin[illegible] bosom and wept aloud; after a little time he en[illegible] iend by saying, 'O Siva! recover thy senses, and [illegible] at I say. Thou wilt certainly regain Sati, since S[illegible] Sati are as inseparable as cold from water, heat from fire, [illegible] from earth, or radiance from the sun!'

"Hearing these words, Siva faintly opened his eyes, bed with tears, and said. 'O form of splendour! who art Who are these that accompany thee? What is thy name what are their names? Who am I, and where are my tendants? Where art thou and these going? Where am and where proceeding?' As Vishnu heard these words wept, and his tears, uniting with those of Siva, formed a l which hence became a famous place of pilgrimage. Vishnu length calmed Siva, who, delighted with his words, beheld Sa

PARVATI WORSHIPPING THE LINGA.

seated before him in a gem-adorned car, accompanied by numerous attendants, arrayed in costly garments, resplendent with ornaments, her placid face being irradiated with a gentle smile. The anguish of separation ceased, and joy filled his soul as Sati thus addressed him: 'Be firm, O Mahādeva! Lord of my soul! In whatever state of my being I may exist, I shall never be separated from my lord; and now have I been born the daughter of Himavat in order to become again thy wife: therefore no longer grieve on account of our separation.' Having thus consoled Siva, Sati disappeared."

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[illegible] another chapter of the same Purāna we have an account of [illegible] reunion.* "Sati soon obtained another birth in the womb [illegible] Jinavat's wife; and Siva, collecting the bones and ashes [illegible] her funeral pile, made a necklace of the bones, and covered [illegible] body with the ashes, and thus preserved them as memorials [illegible] his beloved. Not long after this, Sati was born as the daughter [illegible] Menā, excelling in beauty and virtue all created beings, and [illegible] grew up in her mountain home like the young moon increas[illegible] to its full splendour. Whilst still a girl, she heard a voice from heaven, saying, 'Perform a severe course of austerity, in order to obtain Siva for a husband, as he cannot otherwise be obtained.' Pārvati, proud of her youth, smiling disdainfully at this instruction, thought within herself: 'Will he who, on account of the grief he felt for my having formerly consumed myself, not accept me as his spouse when redolent of life? And how can disjunction exist between those who have been predestined from their first being to be husband and wife?' Confident in her youth, loveliness, and numerous attractions, and persuaded that on the first mention of her name Siva would be anxious to espouse her, Pārvati did not seek to gain him by the performance of austerity, but night and day gave herself to joyous sports with her companions." Her hopes, however, were disappointed. She had to perform most severe penance before she was reunited to her husband; and it was only by the assistance of Kāmadeva, who, at the instigation of the gods, wounded him with his arrows as he was engaged in meditation, whilst Pārvati was seated in front of him, that her wish was gratified. Siva at first was anything but grateful for this interference; he rewarded Kāma by destroying him with a flame of glory that issued from his third eye.

In a Bengali account of Durgā, a legend is given from a later book than the Purāna from which the above extract was taken, to the following effect:—Siva began to dance in a most frantic manner when he raised the dead body of Sati in his arms. The earth trembled beneath the weight of such a load; when

* Kennedy, 'Hindu Myth,' p. 334.

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Vishṇu, fearing there would be an utter destruction of the universe if this were allowed to continue, let fly his wonder-working discus, and cut the body into fifty-one pieces. These fell in different places, a leg here, a hand there; but wherever a part touched the earth, the spot became sacred, an image of the goddess was set up, and a temple erected to her honour, which pilgrims visit as shrines to this day. The renowned temple at Kāli Ghat, near Calcutta, is said to possess the big toe of the left foot; and the principal shrines of Pārvati are believed to contain a relic of her body.

Pārvati is represented in pictures as a fair and beautiful woman, with no superfluity of limbs. Few miraculous deeds are said to have been wrought by her. It is when she appears as Durgā, Kāli, &c., that she is said to manifest her divine powers, and to exhibit a very different spirit from that which appears in her as Pārvati. Hence the supposition that these were originally distinct deities; though now they are believed to be one and the same.

DURGĀ.

We have now to speak of the consort of Siva in a very different character from that in which she appeared as Umā and Pārvati. In those forms, though the wife of Siva, she acted as an ordinary woman, and manifested womanly virtues; as Durgā she was a most powerful warrior, and has been incarnate under many names for the destruction of demons who were obnoxious to gods and men.

She obtained the name Durgā because she slew an Asur named Durga, the name of the goddess being the feminine form of the demon's name. The 'Skanda Purāna'* gives the following account of this occurrence. Kartikeya, being asked by Agastya, the sage, why his mother was called Durgā, says: "A giant named Durga, the son of Ruru, having performed penance in

* Ward, ii. 83.

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favour of Brahma, obtained his blessing, and grew so mighty that he conquered the three worlds, and dethroned Indra and the other gods. He compelled the wives of the Rishis to sing his praise, and sent the gods from heaven to dwell in the forests, and by a mere nod summoned them to reverence him. He abolished religious ceremonies; Brāhmans through fear of him gave up the reading of the Vedas; rivers changed their course; fire lost its energy, and the terrified stars retired from sight. He assumed the shape of the clouds, and gave rain whenever he pleased; the earth through fear yielded an abundant harvest, and the trees flowered and gave fruit out of the proper season."

The gods in their distress appealed to Siva. Indra, their king, said, "He has dethroned me!" Surya said, "He has taken my kingdom!" Siva, pitying them, desired Pārvati to go and destroy this giant. She, accepting the commission willingly, calmed the fears of the gods, and first sent Kālarātri (Dark night), a female whose beauty bewitched the inhabitants of the three worlds, to order the giant to restore things to their ancient order. The giant, full of fury, sent some soldiers to lay hold of Kālarātri; but by the breath of her mouth she reduced them to ashes. Durga then sent 30,000 other giants, who were such monsters in size that they covered the surface of the earth. At the sight of these giants, Kālarātri fled through the air to Pārvati, followed by the giants. Durga, with 100,000,000 chariots, 120,000,000,000 elephants, 10,000,000 swift-footed horses, and innumerable soldiers, went to fight Parvati, on the mountain Vindhya. As soon as the giant drew near, Pārvati assumed 1000 arms, and called to her assistance different beings, and produced a number of weapons from her body (a long list of these is given in the Purāna). The troops of the giant poured their arrows on Pārvati sitting on the mountain Vindhya, thick as the drops of rain in a storm; they even tore up the trees, mountains, &c., and hurled them at the goddess, who threw a weapon which carried away many of the arms of the giants. Durga hurled a flaming dart at the goddess, which she turned aside; another being sent, she stopped it by a hundred arrows. He then sent

an arrow at Pārvati's breast; this too she repelled, and also two other weapons, a club and a pike. At last Pārvati seized Durga and set her left foot on his breast, but he, disengaging himself, renewed the fight.

The beings whom Pārvati caused to issue from her body then destroyed all the soldiers of the giants. In return Durga sent a dreadful shower of hail, the effect of which Pārvati counteracted by an instrument called Sosuna. The giant now assumed the shape of an elephant as large as a mountain, and approached the goddess, but she tied his legs, and with her nails, which were like scimitars, tore him to pieces. He then arose in the form of a buffalo, and with his horns cast stones, trees, and mountains, tearing up the trees by the breath of his nostrils. Pārvati next pierced him with her trident, when he reeled to and fro, and renouncing the form of a buffalo assumed his original body as a giant, with a thousand arms, and weapons in each. Approaching Pārvati, she seized him by his thousand arms, and carried him into the air, whence she threw him to the ground with fearful force. Seeing that this fall had not injured him, she pierced him in the breast with an arrow, when blood issued from his mouth in streams, and he died. The gods were delighted, and soon regained their former splendour.

Another account of the origin of Durgā is found in the *Chandi*, a part of the 'Mārkandeya Purāna.'* Mahisha, king of the giants, at one time overcame the gods in war, and reduced them to such a state of want that they wandered through the earth as beggars. Indra conducted them to Brahmā, and then to Siva; but as these gods could render no assistance, they turned to Vishnu, who was so enraged at the sight of their wretchedness, that streams of glory issued from his face, from which there came forth a female figure named Mahāmāya (another name of Durgā). Streams of glory issued also from the faces of the other gods, which entered Mahāmāya; in consequence of which she became a body of glory, like a mountain,

* Ward, ii. 88.

of fire. The gods then handed their weapons to this female, who with a frightful scream ascended into the air, slew the giant, and gave redress to the gods.

Another account, differing in some details, is found in the 'Vamana Purana.'* When the gods had sought Vishnu in their distress, he, and at his command Sankara, Brahmâ, and the other gods, emitted such flames from their eyes and countenances that a mountain of effulgence was formed, from which became manifest Katyayini, refulgent as a thousand suns, having three eyes, black hair, and eighteen arms. Siva gave her his trident, Vishnu a discus, Varuna a conch-shell, Agni a dart, Vâyu a bow, Surya a quiver full of arrows, Indra a thunderbolt, Kuvera a mace, Brahmâ a rosary and water-pot, Kala a shield and sword, Visvakarma a battle-axe and other weapons. Thus armed, and adored by the gods, Katyayini proceeded to the Vindhya hills. Whilst there the Asuras Chanda and Manda saw her, and being captivated by her beauty they so described her to Mahisha, their king, that he was most anxious to obtain her. On asking for her hand, she told him she must be won in fight. He came, and fought; at length Durgâ dismounted from her lion, and sprang upon the back of Mahisha, who was in the form of a buffalo, and with her tender feet so smote him on the head that he fell to the ground senseless, when she cut off his head with her sword.

In pictures and images Durgâ is represented as a golden-coloured woman, with a gentle and beautiful countenance. She has ten arms; in one hand she holds a spear, with which she is piercing the giant Mahisha; with one of her left hands she holds the tail of a serpent, with another the hair of the giant whose breast the snake is biting; her other hands are filled with various weapons. Her lion leans against her right leg, and the giant against her left. The images of Lakshmi, Sarasvati, Kartikeya, and Ganesa are frequently made and worshipped with that of Durgâ. The frontispiece is a representation of Durgâ and the

* Kennedy, 'Hindu Myth.' p. 335.

other goddesses and gods, as they are made in Bengal at the time of the great autumnal festival.

In Bengal the worship of this goddess forms the most popular of all the Hindu festivals; it continues for three days, and is the great holiday of the year. At this season, as at Christmas in England, the members of the family whom business detains from home during the year return; and with the worship of Durgā is associated all that is bright and cheerful. Sacrifices of buffaloes and goats are made to her; feasting, singing, and dancing are continued through the greater part of the night. Her chief festival is in the autumn, but she is also worshipped, though not so generally, in the spring. The reason of this as taught in a Bengali account of Durgā is as follows:—Rāvana was a devout worshipper of Durgā, and had the Chandi read daily; when therefore Rāma attacked him, the goddess assisted her servant. It was in the spring that Rāvana observed her festival. Rāma, seeing the great help his enemy received from his devotion to this goddess, began himself to worship her. This was in the autumn. Durgā was delighted with the devotion of Rāma, and at once transferred her aid from Rāvana to him.

DASABHUJĀ.

Durgā is said to have assumed ten forms for the destruction of two giants, Sumbha and Nisumbha; the 'Mārkandeya Purāna' describes these incarnations in the following order:—1. As Durgā she received the message of the giants; 2. As Dasabhujā (the ten armed) she slew part of their army; 3. As Singhavāhini

(seated on a hon) she fought with Raktavija; 4. As Mahisha-mardini (destroyer of a buffalo) she slew Sumbha in the form of a buffalo; 5. As Jagaddhātri (the mother of the world) she overcame the army of the giants; 6. As Kali (the black woman) she slew Raktavija; 7. As Muktakesi (with flowing hair) she overcame another of the armies of the giants; 8. As Tāra (the saviour) she slew Sumbha in his own proper shape; 9. As Chinnamustaka (the headless) she killed Nisumbha; 10. As Jagadgauri (the golden-coloured lady renowned through the world) she received the praises and thanks of the gods.*

The great conflict for success in which Durgā assumed so many forms is described as follows in the 'Mārkandeya Purāna.'† At the close of the Treta Age, two giants, named Sumbha and Nisumbha, performed religious austerities for 10,000 years, the merit of which action brought Siva from heaven, who discovered that, by these works of extraordinary devotion, they sought to obtain the blessing of immortality. Siva reasoned long with them, and vainly endeavoured to persuade them to ask for any other blessing than immortality. Being denied, they entered upon more severe austerities, which they continued for another thousand years, when Siva again appeared, but refused to grant what they asked for. They now suspended themselves with their heads downwards over a slow fire, till the blood streamed from their heads, and continued thus for 800 years. The gods began to tremble, lest, by performing such rigid acts of holiness, they should be supplanted on their thrones. The king of the gods called a council, and imparted to them his fears; they admitted that there was great ground for fear, but asked what was the remedy.

Acting upon the advice of Indra, Kandarpa (the god of love), with Rambhā and Tilatamā, the most beautiful of the celestial nymphs, were sent to fill the minds of the giants with sensual desires. Kandarpa letting fly his arrow wounded them both; upon which, awaking from their absorption, and seeing two beautiful women, they were taken in the snare, and abandoned

* Ward, ii. 101. † Ibid. p. 98.

their devotions. With these words they lived for 3000 years; after which they began to think of the folly of renouncing their hopes of immortality for the sake of sensual gratifications. They suspected that this must have been a contrivance of Indra; and, driving back the nymphs to heaven, renewed their devotions, cutting the flesh off their bones, and making burnt offerings of it to Siva. Thus they continued for 1000 years, till they became entire skeletons; when Siva again appeared and bestowed upon them this blessing—that in riches and strength they should excel the gods.

"Being thus exalted above the gods, they began to make war upon them. After various successes on both sides, the giants became everywhere victorious; and Indra and the gods, reduced to a most deplorable state of wretchedness, solicited the interference of Brahma and Vishnu. They referred them to Siva, who declared that he could do nothing for them. When, however, they reminded him that through his blessing they had been ruined, he advised them to perform religious austerities to Durgá. They did so; and after some time the goddess appeared, gave them her blessing, and, disguising herself like a common female carrying a pitcher of water, passed through the assembled gods. She then asked them whose praise they were chanting. Whilst speaking, she assumed her proper form, and replied, 'They are celebrating my praise.'

"This new goddess now disappeared, and ascended Mount Himálaya, where Chanda and Manda, two of Sumbha and Nisumbha's messengers, resided. As these messengers wandered over the mountain, they saw the goddess, and being exceedingly struck with her charms which they described to their masters, advised them to engage the affections of this female, even if they gave her all the glorious things which they had obtained in plundering the heavens of the gods.

"Sumbha sent Sugríva as messenger to the goddess, to inform her that the riches of the three worlds were in his palace; that all the offerings which used to be presented to the gods were now offered to him, and that all these offerings, riches, &c., would be hers, if she would come to him. The goddess replied that the

offer, yet very liberal, but that she had resolved that the person whom she married must first conquer her in war, and destroy her pride. Sugriva, unwilling to return unsuccessful, still pressed for a favourable answer, promising that he would engage to conquer her in war, and subdue her pride; and asked in an authoritative strain: 'Did she know his master, before whom none of the inhabitants of the worlds had been able to stand, whether gods, demons, or man? How then could she, a female, think of resisting his offers? If his master had ordered him, he would have compelled her to go into his presence immediately.' She agreed that this was very correct, but that she had taken her resolution, and exhorted him, therefore, to persuade his master to come and try his strength with her.

"The messenger went and related what he had heard from this female. On hearing his account Sumbha was filled with rage, and without making any reply called for Dhumlochana, his commander-in-chief, and gave him orders to go to Himālaya and seize a certain goddess (giving him particulars), and bring her to him, and, if any attempted to rescue her, utterly to destroy them.

"The commander went to Himālaya, and acquainted the goddess with his master's orders. She, smiling, invited him to execute them. On the approach of this hero, she set up a dreadful roar, by which he was reduced to ashes. After which she destroyed the army of the giant, leaving only a few fugitives to communicate the tidings. Sumbha and Nisumbha, infuriated, sent Chanda and Manda, who on ascending the mountain perceived a female sitting on an ass, laughing. On seeing them she became enraged, and drew to her ten, twenty, or thirty of their army at a time, devouring them like fruit. She next seized Manda by the hair, cut off his head, and, holding it over her mouth, drank the blood. Chanda, on seeing the other commander slain in this manner, came to close quarters with the goddess. But she mounted on a lion, sprang on him, and, despatching him as she had done Manda, devoured part of his army, and drank the blood of the slain.

"The giants no sooner heard this alarming news than they

resolved to go themselves, and collecting their forces, an infinite number of giants marched to Himalaya. The gods looked down with astonishment on this army, and all the goddesses descended to help Mahāmāya (Durgā), who, however, soon destroyed her foes. Raktavija, the principal commander under Sumbha and Nisumbha, seeing all his men destroyed, encountered the goddess in person. But though she covered him with wounds, from every drop of blood which fell to the ground arose a thousand giants equal in strength to Raktavija himself. Hence innumerable enemies surrounded Durgā, and the gods were filled with alarm at the amazing sight. At length Chandi, a goddess who had assisted Kāli in the engagement, promised her that if she would open her mouth and drink his blood before it fell to the ground, she (Chandi) would engage the giant, and destroy the whole of his strangely-formed offspring. Kāli consented, and this commander and his army were soon despatched.

"Sumbha and Nisumbha, in a state of desperation, next engaged the goddess in single combat, Sumbha making the first onset. The battle was inconceivably dreadful on both sides, till at last both the giants were slain, and Kāli sat down to feed on the carnage she had made. The gods and goddesses chanted the praises of the celestial heroine, who in return bestowed a blessing on each."

It seems scarcely correct to speak of these forms of Durgā as incarnations; they are rather epithets descriptive of her appearance or method of fighting at different times during the great conflict. There is, however, so great a difference in appearance and character between Pārvati and Kāli that it is not easy to regard them as the same being; yet Durgā, whilst represented as a warrior fully armed, has the calm features and golden colour of the goddess in her earlier manifestation. It certainly appears to be a reasonable hypothesis that Kāli was originally altogether distinct from Umā or Pārvati.

In the following hymn of Arjuna to Durgā in the Mahābhārata her many names are mentioned:—"Reverence be to thee

[illegible] S. T., iv. 132.

Sridhara-Senani (generalless of the Siddhas), the noble, the dweller on Mandara, Kumāri (Princess), Kāli, Kapālī, Kapilā, Krishnapingala. Reverence to thee, Bhadrakālī; reverence to thee, Mahā Kālī, Chandi, Chandā, Tārini (deliveress), Varavarini (beautiful-coloured). O fortunate Kālyāyani, O Karāli, O Vijayā, O Jayā (victory), younger sister of the chief of cowherds (Krishna), delighting always in Mahisha's blood! O Umā, Sakambhari, thou white one, thou black one! O destroyer of Kaitabha! Of sciences, thou art the science of Brahma (or of the Vedas), the great sleep of embodied beings. O mother of Skanda (Kartikeya), divine Durgā, dweller in wildernesses! Thou, great goddess, art praised with a pure heart. By thy favour let me ever be victorious in battle.' In another verse of this same book she is said to dwell perpetually in the Vindhya hills, and "to delight in spirituous liquors, flesh, and sacrificial victims."

The statement that Durgā was the younger sister of Krishna refers to the fact that it was she who took Krishna's place in Devaki's womb after Vasudeva had carried the infant Krishna to Nanda, and whom Kansa attempted to destroy by dashing her against a stone immediately after her birth. Krishna promised, if she would take his place as Devaki's child, "becoming assimilated to him in glory, she would obtain an eternal place in the sky, be installed by Indra amongst the gods, obtain a perpetual abode on the Vindhya mountains, where meditating upon him (Vishnu) she would kill two demons, Sumbha and Nishumbha, and would be worshipped with animal sacrifices."*

THE CHIEF FORMS OF DURGĀ.

1. DURGĀ received Chanda and Manda, the messengers of the giants; they, struck with her beauty, spoke so rapturously of her to their lords that Sumbha sent her an offer of marriage by Sugriva.

2. DASABHUJĀ,† the ten-handed, destroyed Sumbha's army under the commander-in-chief Dhumlochana. Of these troops

* Mur. G. S. T., iv. 34.

only a few fugitives escaped to carry the news of their defeat to their master.

3. SINGHAVĀHINI (riding on a lion) fought with Chanda and Munda, and has four arms only. She drank the blood of the leaders, and devoured a large part of their troops.

4. MAHISHAMARDINI (the slayer of Mahisha) slew Sumbha as he attacked her in the form of a buffalo. She had eight or, according to other accounts, ten arms. There is little to distinguish the account of this form from that of Durgā.

5. JAGADDHĀTRI (the mother of the world) destroyed another army of the giants; is dressed in red garments, and is seated on a lion. She, too, has four arms only, and is very similar to Singhavāhini; the difference being in the weapons she wields. As Singhavāhini, she carries a sword and spear, and with two hands is encouraging her worshippers; as Jagaddhātri, she carries a conch-shell, discus, bow and arrow. In all the above forms she is represented as a fair, beautiful, gentle-looking lady.

JAGADDHĀTRI.

6. KĀLI (the black woman), or, as she is more commonly called Kāli Mā, the black mother, with the aid of Chandi, slew Raktavija, the principal leader of the giant's army. Seeing his men fall, he attacked the goddess in person; when from every drop of blood that fell from his body a thousand giants equal in power to himself arose. At this crisis another form of the goddess, named Chandi, came to the rescue. As Kāli drank the giant's blood and prevented the formation of new giants, Chandi slew the monster herself.

Kāli is represented as a black woman with four arms; in one hand she has a sword, in another the head of the giant she has slain, with the other two she is encouraging her worshippers. For earrings she has two dead bodies; wears a necklace of skulls; her only clothing is a girdle made of dead men's hands, and her tongue protrudes from her mouth. Her eyes are red as those of a drunkard, and her face and breasts are besmeared with blood. She stands with one foot on the thigh, and another on the breast of her husband. This position of Kāli is accounted for by the fact that, when her victory over the giants was won, she danced for joy so furiously that the earth trembled beneath her weight. At the request of the gods Siva asked her to desist, but as, owing to her excitement, she did not notice him, he lay down amongst the slain. She continued dancing until she caught sight of her husband under her feet; immediately she thrust out her tongue with shame at the disrespect she had shown him.

In the 'Adhyatma * Rāmāyana,'† is a legend giving quite a different origin of Kāli; the object of the writer evidently being to enhance the glory of Sita, by showing that Kāli was but a form that she had assumed. On Rāma's return from the destruction of Rāvana, he was boasting of his prowess, when Sita smiled and said: "You rejoice because you have slain Rāvana with ten heads, but what would you say to a Rāvana with a

* There are four recensions of the Rāmāyana: Valmiki's, Vyasadeva's, the Adhuta, and the Adhyatma.

† Ward, ii. 116.

thousand." "Destroy him too," said Rama. Sita [illegible] him to remain at home; but he collected his army of monkeys and with his wife and brothers set off for Saladwipa to meet the new Ravana. Hanuman was despatched to discover the residence of the monster, and to gather all the information

KALI DANCING ON SIVA

could about him, and on his return Rama went to the attack. The giant regarded the army of his assailant as so many children. He shot three arrows. One of these sent all the monkeys to their home at Kiskindha; a second drove the giants and demons to Lanka; whilst the third despatched the soldiers to Ayodha, Rama's capital. Rama was thunderstruck, as he found

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[illegible] and, imagining that all his forces were destroyed, began to weep. Sita, laughing at her husband, assumed the terrific form of Kāli, and furiously attacked the thousand-headed Rāvana. The conflict lasted ten years, but at length she slew the giant, drank his blood, and began to dance and toss about the limbs of his lifeless body. Her dancing shook the earth to its centre; but not until Siva lay on the ground, and her attention was called to the disrespect she was showing him, could she be prevailed upon to desist. Thus Siva saved the universe; and Sita, assuming her proper form, went home with Rāma and his brothers.

The 'Skanda Purāna' * explains that Chandi, who came to the rescue and assisted Kāli in the destruction of Raktavija, was a form of Devi, assumed on another occasion for the destruction of Chanda. It is interesting to see that these leaders of Sumbha's army reappear, although they were slain, and their blood was drunk by Singhavāhini. Two Asuras, named Chanda and Manda, through a boon received from the divine mothers, became so powerful as to subdue the three worlds. The gods besought Devi, who appeared to them under the form of Chandi to deliver them; she replied, "that she could do nothing for them until she had propitiated Siva." To accomplish this she retired to a forest, and whilst engaged in worship Siva first appeared, under the form of a vast Linga, and then, in answer to Chandi's prayer, revealed himself, and in answer to her praises thus addressed her: "O goddess! Thou art celebrated in the three worlds as Parasakti (the energy of the supreme being). Wherever thou art, there am I; and wherever I am, there is Chandikā. There is no difference between us. What shall I do for you?" Chandi replies: "Formerly I slew Chanda and Manda in battle; but they have been born again as mighty Asuras, and have oppressed the three worlds. It is therefore to be enabled to destroy them that I seek thy protection." Siva promises his help, and sends her in the guise of a messenger to challenge them to fight. They accept the challenge and are slain by Siva,

* Kennedy, 'Hindu Myth.,' p. 338.

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The 'Linga Purāna'* seems to teach that Kāli, though produced by Pārvati, was yet distinct from her. Formerly a female Asura named Dāruka had through devotion obtained such power that she consumed like fire the gods and Brāhmans. But as she was attended by a host of female Asuras, Vishnu and the gods feared to attack her, lest they should be guilty of the great sin of slaying a woman. Siva is then appealed to, who, addressing Devi, said: "Let me request, O lovely One! that thou wouldst effect the destruction of this Dāruka." Pārvati, having heard these words, created from her own substance a maiden of black colour, with matted locks, having an eye in her forehead, bearing in her hand a trident and a skull; she was of aspect terrible to behold, was arrayed in celestial garments, and adorned with all kinds of ornaments. On beholding this terrific form of darkness, the gods retreated in alarm. Pārvati then created innumerable ghosts, goblins, and demons; attended by these, Kāli, in obedience to her order, attacked and destroyed Dāruka.

Maurice † gives another account of Kāli: "The origin of this singular deity is perfectly in union with her life and history. Arrayed in complete armour, she sprang from the eye of the dreadful war-bred goddess Durgā, the vanquisher of demons and giants, at the very instant that she was sinking under their united assaults. Kāli joining her extraordinary powers to those of her parent, they renew the combat and rout their foes with great slaughter."

The 'Mārkandeya Purāna'‡ makes Kāli to be a production of Lakshmi. The origin of all things is Mahā Lakshmi, who visibly or invisibly pervades and dwells in all that is. Separating from herself the quality of darkness, she gave origin to a form black as night, with dreadful tusks and large eyes, and holding a sword, a goblet, a head and a shield, and adorned with a necklace of skulls. She is distinguished by the names of Mahākāli, Ekāvirā, Kālarātri, and other similar appellations. Then from the quality of purity she produced Sarasvati. As

* Kennedy, 'Hindu Myth.,' p. 337. † 'Indian Antiquities,' ii. 184.
‡ Kennedy, 'Hindu Myth.,' p. 210.

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each as they were formed, Mahā Lakshmi thus addressed Mahākali and Sarasvati: 'Let us from our own forms produce twin deities.' She then generated a male and female, named Brahma and Lakshmi; in the same manner Mahākali produced Siva and Sarasvati, and Sarasvati produced Gauri and Vishnu. Mahā Lakshmi then gave in marriage Sarasvati to Brahmā, Gauri to Siva, and Lakshmi to Vishnu.

There can be no doubt that human sacrifices were formerly offered to Kāli, though now they are forbidden both by British law and the Hindu Scriptures; the prohibition in Hindu books, however, is in a more recent class of books than those in which they were ordained. In the 'Kālika Purāna,'* from which the following extracts are made, nothing could be clearer than the instruction regarding this cruel practice. Siva is addressing his sons the Bhairavas, initiating them in these terrible mysteries.

"The flesh of the antelope and the rhinoceros give my beloved (Kāli) delight for five hundred years. By a human sacrifice, attended by the forms laid down, Devi is pleased for a thousand years; and by the sacrifice of three men, a hundred thousand years. By human flesh Kāmākhyā, Chandikā, and Bhairavā, who assume my shape, are pleased a thousand years. An oblation of blood which has been rendered pure by holy texts, is equal to ambrosia; the head and flesh also afford much delight to Chandikā. Blood drawn from the offerer's own body is looked upon as a proper oblation to the goddess Chandikā.

"Let the sacrificer repeat the word Kāli twice, and say, 'Hail, Devi! goddess of thunder; hail, iron-sceptred goddess!' Let him then take the axe in his hand, and again invoke the same by the Kalaratri text, as follows: 'Let the sacrificer say, Hrang, Hrang! Kāli, Kali! O horrid-toothed goddess! Eat, cut, destroy all the malignant; cut with this axe; bind, bind; seize, seize; drink blood! Spheng, spheng! secure, secure. Salutation to Kali.' The axe being invoked by this text, called the Kālarātri Mantra, Kālarātri herself presides over the axe, uplifted for the destruction of the sacrificer's enemies.

* Moor's 'Hindu Pantheon,' 144 ff.

"Different mantrás (or formulæ) are used in reference to the description of the victim to be immolated. If a lion, this is—

"O Hari! who in the shape of a lion bearest Chandiká, bear my evils and avert my misfortunes. Thy shape, O lion! was assumed by Hari [in the Nrisingha incarnation of Vishnu] to punish the wicked part of the human race; and under that form, by truth, the tyrant Hiranykasipu was slain!'

"Females are not to be immolated, except on very particular occasions; the human female never.

"Let princes, ministers of State, councillors, and vendors of spirituous liquors make human sacrifices, for the purpose of attaining prosperity and wealth. Let the victim offered to Devi, if a buffalo, be four years old; and if human, twenty-five. On these occasions this is the mantra to be used: 'Hail! three-eyed goddess, of most terrifying appearance, around whose neck a string of human skulls is pendent; who art the destroyer of evil spirits; who art armed with an axe and a spear, salutation to thee with this blood.'

"An enemy may be immolated by proxy, substituting a buffalo or a goat, and calling the victim by the name of the enemy through the whole ceremony, thereby infusing, by holy texts, the soul of the enemy into the body of the victim; which will when immolated deprive the foe of life also. On this occasion, let the sacrificer say: 'O goddess of horrid forms! O Chandiká! Eat, devour such an one my enemy. Consort of fire! salutation to fire. This is the enemy who has done me mischief, now personated by an animal—destroy him, O Mahámári!'"

A great variety of regulations and invocations, rites, &c., are laid down for the performance of sanguinary offerings, whether the immolation of a victim, or an offering of the sacrificer's own blood, or burning his flesh. Until very recent times commonly, and in some quiet places even now, at certain festivals, the worshippers cut their flesh and burn their bodies in order to please this cruel deity. It is said that before the Thugs set out on their murderous projects they first sacrificed to Káli to obtain her blessing; and, on their return, paid a portion of the spoils as an offering for her help.

[illegible] (having flowing hair) destroyed another part [illegible] giant's forces. In appearance there is little to distinguish her from Kāli: she has four arms; holds a sword and a helmet in her left hands, and with her right she is bestowing a blessing and dispelling fear. She, too, is standing upon the body of her husband.

8. TĀRA (the saviour) slew Sumbha, and holds his head in one hand and a sword in another. Her appearance, too, is similar to that of Kāli. She must not be confounded with Tārā, the wife of Vrihaspati; or Tārā, the wife of Bāli, the Asura king.

9. CHINNAMUSTAKA (the beheaded) slew Nisumbha, the other giant. It is evident from her appearance that she found her task rather difficult, for her head is half-severed from her body. She is painted as a fair woman, naked, and wearing a garland of skulls, standing upon the body of her husband.

10. JAGADGAURI (the yellow woman [renowned] through the world) received the thanks and praises of the gods and men for the deliverance she wrought; in her four hands she holds a conch-shell, a discus, a club, and a lotus.

Images are made of Durgā at different seasons of the year in nearly all of these ten forms, and various blessings are sought from her by her worshippers. In addition to these she is worshipped under other names; some of the more generally known will now be given. It should be noticed that the Hindus who worship Durgā in some of her forms, and the other female deities, when they represent the Sakti, or energy of their husbands, are called Saktas, and form a class distinct from the Hindus generally. An exception, however, must be made in respect to Sarasvati, Lakshmi, and the autumnal worship of Durgā; this particular form of worship being common to almost all Hindus.

11. PRATYANGIRA (the well-proportioned one). Of this form of Durgā no images are made, but at night the officiating priest, wearing red clothes, offers red flowers, liquors, and bloody

* Ward, ii. 101–117.

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sacrifices. The flesh of animals slipped in some liquid and the drink is burned; the worshipper believing that the flesh of the enemy for whose injury the ceremony is performed will swell, as the flesh of the sacrifice swells in the fire.

12. ANNAPURNĀ (she who fills with food) is represented as a fair woman, standing on a lotus. In one hand she holds a rice bowl, and in the other a spoon used for stirring rice when it is being boiled. Siva, as a mendicant, is receiving alms from her. She is the guardian deity of many Hindus, who have a proverb to the effect that a sincere disciple of this deity will never want rice. It is in connexion with this form of Durgā that the 'Linga Purāna'* gives a legend explaining an image called Ardhanārishwara, which represents Siva and Durgā as together forming one body. Siva as a mendicant supported his wife and children by begging; but on one occasion, owing to his use of intoxicating herbs, he was unable to go his rounds. Durgā told him there was nothing in the house to eat; half the previous day's contributions they had eaten; Ganesa's rat and Kartikeya's peacock having finished the rest. Siva then went out to beg, and

ANNAPURNĀ

* Ward, II. 187.

departed for her father's house with the children, but was [illegible] by Nārada, who advised her, as Annapurnā, to lay an embargo on all the food of the houses where Siva asked for alms. The result of this was that no one would give him anything. Nārada meeting with Siva advised him to go home, Annapurnā met him at the door, and so pleased him by giving him food, that he pressed her to his breast with such force that they became one body.

13. GANESAJANANI (the mother of Ganesa) is worshipped with her infant in her arms.

14. KRISHNAKRORA (she who holds Krishna on her breast). When Krishna fought with the serpent Kaliya in the river Yamuna, he was bitten, and in pain called upon Durgā for help. She heard his cry, and, by suckling him from her breast, restored him to health.

This list might be almost indefinitely enlarged. From the number of her names, it is evident she is largely worshipped in North India; and from the number of Hindus bearing some one or other of her names, it is certain that she is most popular. It is a common custom for the Hindus to give their children names indicating the god or goddess through whose favour they are believed to have been given, and certainly Durgā seems to have had a part in the bestowal of a very large proportion of the children in Bengal. "By the favour of Kāli, or Durgā, or Tārā," expressed in the names of multitudes, and every day witnesses the payment of vows made to this goddess when some desired good is granted, or threatened evil averted.

INDIRA GHANDI CENTRE OF THE ARTS

CHAPTER VIII.

SONS OF SIVA AND PĀRVATI.

I. GANESA.

GANESA is said to be the elder son of Siva and Pārvati, but the Purānas that describe his origin differ very considerably in their narratives of this event. Sir W. Jones says[1] that "Ganesa, the Indian god of Wisdom, has the same characteristics as Janus of the Latins. All sacrifices and religious ceremonies, all serious compositions in writing, and all worldly affairs of importance are begun by pious Hindus with an invocation to Ganesa; a word composed of Isa, the governor or leader, and gana, a company (of deities). Instances of opening business auspiciously by in-

GANESA.

[1] 'Asiatic Researches,' i. 227.

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[illegible] to him might be multiplied with ease. Few books [illegible] with of the words, 'Salutation to Ganesa;' and [illegible] invoked by Brāhmans who conduct the trial by ordeal [illegible] perform the ceremony of the home or sacrifice to fire." M[illegible] represents him as highly revered on the coast of [illegible]mandel, where, according to him, "the Indians would not on [illegible] account build a house without having placed on the ground [illegible] image of this deity, which they sprinkle with oil and adorn [illegible] day with flowers. They set up his image in all their temples, in the streets, in the high roads, and in the open plains [illegible] the foot of some tree, so that persons of all ranks may invoke him before they undertake any business, and travellers worship him before they proceed on a journey." What is true of the Coromandel coast, is true of most parts of India so far as the worship of this deity is concerned.

"Ganesa is the Hindu god of Prudence and Policy. He is the reputed eldest son of Siva and Pārvati (the 'Padma Purāna' alone declares that he was the actual child of these deities), and is represented with an elephant's head—an emblem of sagacity—and is frequently attended by, or is riding upon, a rat. He has generally four hands, but sometimes six, or eight, or only two."* He is always described as being very corpulent; and pictures or images of him are seen over the doors of most shopkeepers. It is not easy to see why Ganesa has become so universally worshipped, as there are few if any legends in the Purānas attesting his divine power.

The 'Brahmāvaivarta Purāna'† gives the following account of his birth:—"Pārvati, after her marriage with Siva, being without a child, and very desirous to obtain one, is advised by her husband to perform the Panyākavrata. This is the worship of [illegible], to be begun on the thirteenth day of the bright fortnight of Māgha, and continued for a year, on every day of which flowers, fruits, cakes, vessels, gems, gold, &c., are to be presented, and a thousand Brāhmans fed; and the performer of the rite is to observe most carefully a life of inward purity, and to fix his

* Moor's 'Hindu Pantheon,' p. 169. † Wilson's Works, iii. 103.

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mind on Hari (Vishnu). Pārvati having, with the aid of Krishna, as directing priest, accomplished the ceremony on the banks of the Ganges, returns after some interval, in which she sees Krishna, first as a body of light, and afterwards as an old Brahman, come to her dwelling. The reward of her religious zeal being delayed, she is plunged in grief, when a viewless voice tells her to go to her apartment, where she will find a son who is the lord of Goloka, or Krishna, that deity having assumed the semblance of her son as a recompense for her devotions.

"In compliment to this occasion, all the gods came to congratulate Siva and Pārvati, and were severally admitted to see the infant. Amidst the splendid cohort was Sani, the planet Saturn, who, although anxious to pay his homage to the child, kept his eyes stedfastly fixed on the ground. Pārvati asking him the reason of this, he told her that, being immersed in meditation upon Vishnu, he had disregarded the caresses of his wife, and, in resentment of his neglect, she had denounced upon him the curse that whomsoever he gazed upon he should destroy. To obviate the evil consequences of this imprecation, he avoided looking any one in the face. Pārvati, having heard his story, paid no regard to it, but, considering that what must be must be, gave him permission to look on her son. Sani, calling Dharma to witness his having leave, took a peep at Ganesa, on which the child's head was severed from his body, and flew away to the heaven of Krishna, where it re-united with the substance of him of whom it formed a part.

"Durgā, taking the headless trunk in her arms, cast herself weeping on the ground, and the gods thought it decent to follow her example, all except Vishnu, who mounted Garuda, and flew off to the river Pushpabhadra, where, finding an elephant asleep, he took off his head, and, flying back with it, clapped it on to the body of Ganesa; hence the body of that deity is crowned with its present uncouth capital. On the restoration of Ganesa to life, valuable gifts were made to the gods and Brāhmans by the parents, and by Pārvati's father, the personified Himalaya. The unfortunate Sani was again anathematized, and, in consequence of Pārvati's curse, has limped ever since.

[illegible] another part of this same Purāna further particulars are [illegible] somewhat at variance with the above. Siva, offended with [illegible]ya (the sun), slew him, and although he restored him to life [illegible]ourred the wrath of the sage Kasyapa, who doomed his (Siva's) son to lose his head. The elephant whose head was placed upon Ganesa's body was Indra's elephant, which was decapitated because Indra threw over his neck the garland of flowers which the sage Durvasas gave him, and the disrespect of which, with the consequent degradation of Indra, is noticed in various Purānas, although in all other respects with different results. Indra was no loser of an elephant by this transaction, as Vishnu, moved by the prayers of his wife, gave him another in place of that which he took away.

Ganesa has only one tusk, and hence is called Ekadanta. The reason of this is as follows:—Parasurāma, who was a favourite disciple of Siva, went to Kailasa to visit his master. On arriving at the inner apartment, his entrance was opposed by Ganesa, as his father was asleep. Parasurāma nevertheless urged his way, and, after a long dialogue, the two came to blows. Ganesa had at first the advantage, seizing Parasurāma in his trunk, and giving him a twirl that left him sick and senseless. On recovering Rāma threw his axe at Ganesa, who, recognising it as his father's weapon—Siva having given it to Parasurāma—received it with all humility upon one of his tusks, which it immediately severed, and hence Ganesa has but one tusk. Pārvati was highly incensed at this, and was about to curse Rāma, when Krishna, of whom he was a worshipper, appeared as a boy and appeased her indignation. Brahmā is said to have promised that her son should be worshipped before the other gods. This result of his contest with Rāma was in consequence of a curse pronounced upon him by the sage Tulasi, with whom he had quarrelled."

We have quite a different account of the origin of Ganesa in the 'Matsya Purāna.'* When Pārvati was bathing, she took the oil and ointments used at the bath, together with the impurities that

* Kennedy, 'Hindu Myth.,' p. 353.

...ame from her body, and formed them into the figure of a man, ... which she gave life by sprinkling it with the water of the ...anges. This figure had the head of the elephant. The 'Siva ...vāna' relates that, after giving Ganesa life, Pārvati placed him at ... door to prevent intrusion whilst she was bathing. On his re... al to allow Siva to enter, a struggle ensued, in which that deity ... off Ganesa's head; but when Pārvati showed her husband that ... her orders that the door was closed, and wept because ...ss of her son, Siva ordered the first head that could be ... be brought to him: this happened to be an elephant's, ... fitted to the headless trunk and resuscitated his son.

'Vārāha Purāna'* Ganesa is said to have been produced ... alone. "The immortals and holy sages observing that ...ns which they or others commenced, whether good or ... difficulty occurred in accomplishing them, consulted ... respecting the means by which obstacles might be ... the commission of bad actions, and then repaired to ... counsel, to whom they said: 'O Mahādeva! God of ...hree eyed, bearer of the trident, it is thou alone who ...reate a being capable of opposing obstacles to the com... of improper acts.' Hearing these words, Siva looked ...vati, and whilst thinking how he could effect the wishes ... gods, from the splendour of his countenance there sprang ...istence a youth shedding radiance around, endowed with ...lities of Siva, and evidently another Rudra, and cap... by his beauty the female inhabitants of heaven.

... seeing his beauty was excited with jealousy, and in her ... nounced this curse: 'Thou shalt not offend my sight ...rm of a beautiful youth; therefore assume an ...nd and a large belly, and thus shall all thy beauties ... then addressed his son, saying: 'Thy name shall ...nd the son of Siva; thou shalt be chief of the ...l Ganas; success and disappointment shall spring ...d great shall be thine influence amongst the gods ...es and all affairs. Therefore shalt thou be wor...

* Kennedy, 'Hindu Myth.,' p. 253.

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...d and invoked the first of all occasions, or otherwise t...
...t and prayers of him who omits to do so shall fail.'"

The origin and purpose of Ganesa's existence are more fu...
...ught in the Skanda.* Siva addressing Pārvati says: "Dur...
the twilight that intervened between the Dwarpara and K...
Yugas, women, barbarians, Sudras, and other workers of ...
obtained entrance to heaven by visiting the cele...
shrine of Someswara (Somnāth). Sacrifices, ascetic ...
charitable gifts, and all the other prescribed ordinnnc...
and men thronged only to the temple of Siva. Hence ...
young, those skilled in the Vedas and those ignorant ...
and even women and Sudras, ascended to heaven, until ...
it became crowded to excess. Then Indra and t...
afflicted because thus overcome by men, sought the p...
of Siva, and thus addressed him: 'O Sankara! by th...
heaven is crowded with men, and we are nearly expe...
it. These mortals wander wherever they please, excla...
am the greatest, I am the greatest;" and Dharmarāja ...
beholding the register of their good and evil deeds, is ...
astonishment. The seven hells were intended for th...
ception; but, having visited thy shrine, their sins hav...
remitted, and they have attained to a most excellent ...
Siva replied: 'Such was my promise to Soma, nor ca...
infringed; all men, therefore, who visit the temple of So...
must ascend to heaven; but supplicate Parvati, and ...
contrive some means for extricating you from this distre...
The gods then invoked Pārvati in laudatory ...
To thee be to thee, O supreme of goddesses! Suppo...
universe, praise be to thee, who createst and destroy...
thy aid, and save us from this distress!". Hav...
anger of Indra and the gods, thou, O goddess, ...
with compassion; and gently rubbing thy bo...
produced a wondrous being with four arms and ...
hand, and then thou didst thus address the go...
of your advantage, have I created this being, who ...

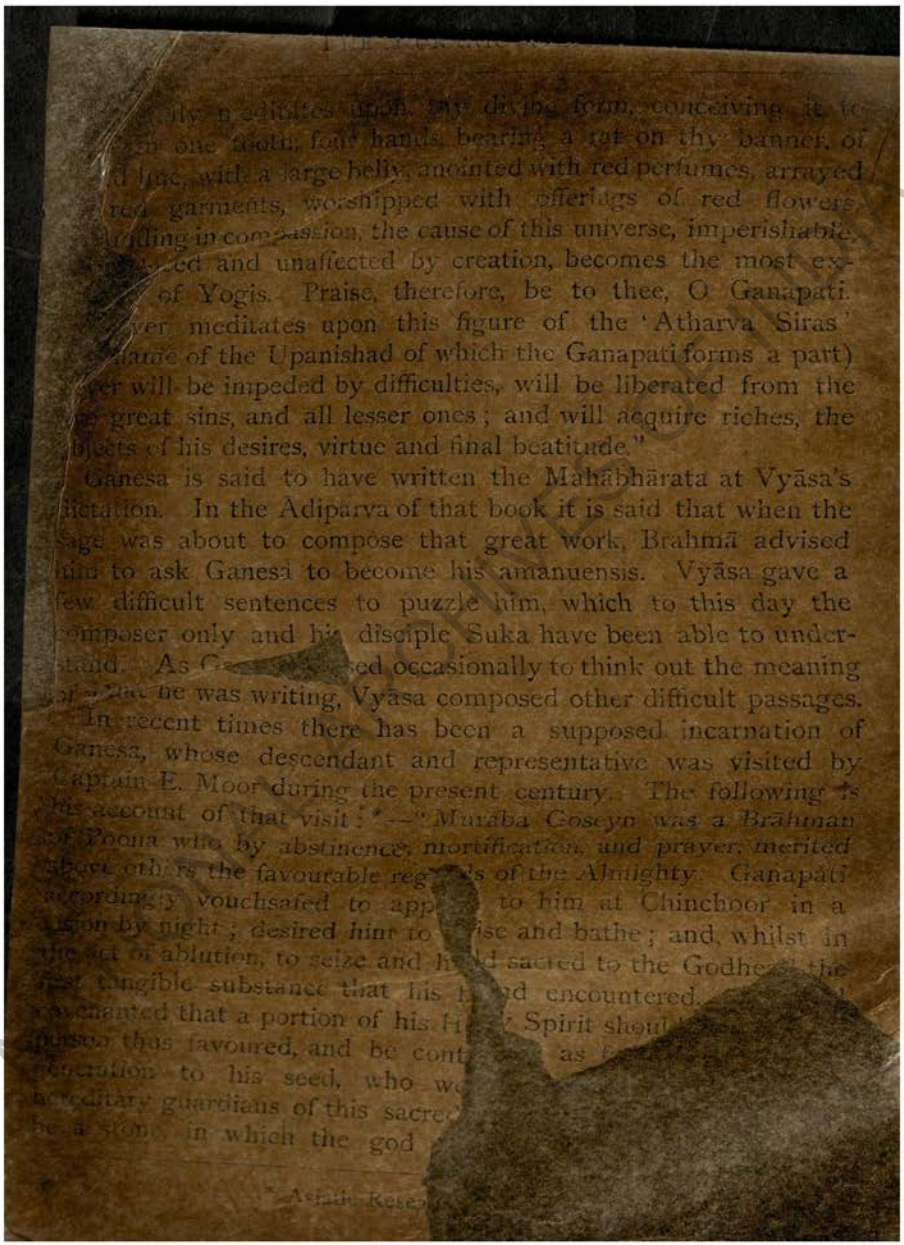
* Kennedy, Hindu Myth., p. 354.

obstacles to men, and deluding them, will deprive them o
wish to visit Somnatha: and thus shall they fall into h
Hearing this, the gods returned to their homes delighted.

"The Elephant-faced then, addressing Devi, said: 'Comma
O lovely goddess! what shall I now do?' Thou didst r
'Oppose obstacles to men's visiting Somnātha, and ent
to give up such a purpose by the allurements of wive
dren, possessions, and wealth. But from those who pra
thee with the following hymn, do thou remove all obst
and enable them to obtain the favour of Siva, by worshipping
at his shrine at Somnātha:—"Om, I praise thee, O lord
difficulties! The beloved spouse of Siddhi (knowledge) an
Buddhi (understanding); Ganapati, invincible, and the giver o
victory; the opposer of obstacles to the success of men who d
not worship thee! I praise thee, O Ganesa! The dreadin
son of Umā, but firm, and easily propitiated! O Vinayaka!
I praise thee! O elephant-faced, who didst formerly protect
the gods, and accomplish their wishes, I praise thee!" Thus
continued Parvati, 'shalt thou be praised' [illegible] And
whoever previously invokes the god Vinayaka, no difficulty
shall impede the attainment of his purposed object, and a mos
beneficial result shall he derive from sacrifices, pilgrimages, and
all other devotional acts."

The following extract from the 'Ganapati Upanishad' is a
specimen of the addresses to Ganesa used by the Ganapatyas:
"Praise to thee, O Ganesa! Thou art manifestly the
thou art undoubtedly the [illegible]ator, Preserver, and Destr
the Supreme Brahma, the et[illegible]nal Spirit. I speak what is
and true: preserve me there[illegible]re, when speaking, listening, giv
[illegible] teaching, learni[illegible]; continually protect me everywhe
[illegible] this universe [illegible]nifested; for thou art earth, water
The [illegible] Brahmā, Vishnu, and Rudra. (Ve
[illegible] Ekadanta! and meditate on th
[illegible]fore, our understanding. He who

[illegible] p. 403.
[illegible] the supreme object of worship.



...This type is duly reverenced, careful... has ever been the constant companion of the sa... inheriting with it the divine patrimony. This ... happened about A.D. 1640; and at the time Captain M... the place, the sixth descendant was the representative of th...

"It does not now appear what was the precise exte... divine energy originally conceded, but it is inferred to h... a limited power of working miracles, such as healing ... answering the prayers of pious suppliants, and the ... foretelling future events. These gifts were enjoyed in a ... extensive degree by the earlier representatives of the god; but the person whom Moor saw professed to have performed several miracles. The third in descent is reported to have performed a wonderful work. It was in his time that the Moghul army of Hyderabad so successfully invaded the Mahratta country. After plundering and burning Poona, a party proceeded to Chinchoor, the residence of this Deity, to lay it under contribution. To this the Deo refused to submit, confiding in the divine influence wherewith he was invested. The Mussulmans derided such superstition, and with a view of rendering it ridiculous offered to send a Nuzur (present) to the Deo. The offer was accepted, the Deo betook himself to prayers, and the insulting bigots deputed certain persons to see the result, as apparently a decorous and appropriate present was given. It consisted however of cow's flesh, an abomination in the eyes of a Hindu. When the trays were uncovered, they were greatly astonished to find that, instead of the cow's flesh, the trays were filled with the finest and most sacred flowers of the Hindus. The Mussulmans seeing this, recognised the finger of God in the transaction, and so struck were they with the reality of the miracle that a valuable grant of land was made to the Deo, which his temple enjoys to this day."

The Deo eats, sleeps, marries, and lives the life of an ordinary mortal; and though he is regarded as a fool in worldly matters he is worshipped as a god. On special occasions his actions and movements are most carefully watched, as they are the transient manifestations of the divine will, and are regarded as prophetic

[illegible] part of the night should be remain in peaceful [illegible] reposing is predicted; should his slumbers or his [illegible] be disturbed, national calamities are expected. [illegible] wildly from his seat, seize a sword, or make any [illegible] movement, war is expected.

2. KARTIKEYA.

[illegible]tikeya, the god of war, and generalissimo of the armies of the gods, though called the younger son of Siva and Pārvatī, according to most of the Purānic legends, is their son only in the sense that they formed him. Brahmā arranged for his birth in answer to the prayers of the gods for a competent leader of their forces. The Rāmāyana* says: "While Siva, the lord of the gods, was performing austerities, the other deities went to Brahmā and asked for a general in the room of Mahādeva, who, it seems, had formerly acted in that capacity. 'He,' said they, 'whom thou didst formerly give as a leader of our armies (Mahādeva), is now performing great austerities, along with Umā.' Brahmā says that in consequence of the curse of Umā no son could be born of any wives of the gods, but that Agni should have a son by the river Gangā, who should be their general."

KARTIKEYA.

* Minr. O. S. T., iv. 364.

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In the following extract from the Mahābhārata* is an explanation of the statement in the preceding paragraph that Agni was to be the father of this god. Kartikeya has just been installed as general, when, "the god whose banner is a bull (Siva), arriving with his goddess, paid him honour, well pleased. Brāhmans call Agni Rudra, consequently he (Kartikeya) is the son of Rudra. Having seen him thus honoured by Rudra, all the deities consequently call him, who is the most excellent of the gifted, the son of Rudra. For this child was produced by Rudra when he entered into fire. Skanda (Kartikeya), that most eminent deity, being born of Agni, [who was] Rudra, and from Svāhā (Umā) [and] the six wives [of the Rishis], was the son of Rudra."

This quotation will be more intelligible after reading what precedes it:—"Indra being distressed at the defeat of the armies of the gods by the Dānavas, is meditating on this subject, when he hears the cry of a female calling for help, and asking for a husband to protect her. Indra sees that she has been seized by the demon Kesin, with whom he remonstrates; but the demon hurls his club at Indra, who, however, splits it with his thunderbolt. Kesin is disabled in the next stage of the combat, and goes off. Indra then finds out from the female that her name is *Devasenā* (army of the gods), that she has a sister named *Daityasenā* (army of the Daityas), and that they are both daughters of Prajāpati. She wishes Indra to find for her a proper husband, who shall be able to overcome all the enemies of the gods. Indra takes Devasenā with him to Brahmā, and desires him to provide her with a martial husband; and Brahmā promises that a helpmate of that description shall be born. It happened that Vasishtha and other Rishis had been offering a sacrifice, whither the gods, headed by Indra, proceeded to drink the Soma-juice. Agni, too, being invoked, descended from the region of the sun, entered into the fire, received the oblations of the Rishis, and presented them to the gods.

"Issuing forth [from the fire], he beheld the wives of those

* Muir, O. S. T., iv. 359.

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[illegible] Rishis] reclining in their own hermitages, and sweetly [illegible]ing, resembling golden altars, quite as beams of the moon, [illegible] to flames of fire, all wonderful as stars. Perceiving that his senses became agitated, beholding the wives of the Rishis, Agni was overcome with desire. Again and again he said: 'It is not proper that I should be thus agitated; they are not in love with me. Entering into the domestic fire, I shall gaze upon them close at hand.' Entering the domestic fire, touching, as it were, with his flames, all of them, and beholding them, he was delighted. Dwelling thus there for a long time, fixing his attention on these beautiful women, and enamoured of them, Agni was overcome.

"Agni failing to obtain the Brāhmans' wives, resolved to abandon his corporeal form, and went into the forest. Then Svāhā, the daughter of Daksha, first fell in love with him. This amorous and blameless goddess for a long time sought for his weak point, but could not find any. But being aware that he had gone into the wood, and that he was really disturbed by desire, the amorous goddess reflected: 'I, who am distressed with love, will take the forms of the seven Rishis' wives, and will court the affection of Agni. By doing so he will be pleased, and I shall obtain my desire.' Assuming first the form of Siva, the wife of Angiras, the handsome goddess went to Agni, and thus addressed him: 'Agni, thou ought not to leave me, who am disturbed with love for thee; if thou will not do so, look upon me as dead.' Agni, I, Siva, the wife of Angiras, have come, sent by virtuous women.' Agni replied: 'How dost thou, and how do the other beloved wives of the seven Rishis, know that I am distressed with love?'"

Agni was not able to resist the temptation. After the interval lest the wives of the Rishis should [illegible] their misconduct if she happened to be seen in their [illegible] assumed the figure of Garuda, the bird of Vishnu, and [illegible] she thought, flew from the forest. She visited Agni a second time as the wife of another Rishi, and so on until she had paid six visits. The germs obtained from Agni she deposited in a golden receptacle, which, being worshipped by the Rishis, generated a

son, Kumara (Kartikeya) was born with six heads, a double number of ears, twelve eyes, arms, and feet, one neck and one belly.

"Kartikeya marries Devasenā. The six Rishis' wives, his mothers, afterwards come to him, complaining that they had been abandoned by their husbands, and degraded from their former positions, and asking him to secure their admission into paradise (Swarga). When Skanda had done what was gratifying to his mothers, Svāhā said to him: 'Thou art my genuine son. I desire the love difficult to obtain which thou givest.' Skanda then asked her: 'What love dost thou desire?' Svāhā replied: 'I am the beloved daughter of Daksha, by name Svāhā. From my childhood I have been enamoured of Agni; but, my son, Agni does not thoroughly know me, who am enamoured of him.' Skanda replied: 'Whatever oblation of Brahmans is introduced by hymns, they shall always, goddess, lift and throw it into the fire, saying Svāhā (happiness). Thus, O beautiful goddess, Agni shall dwell with thee continually.' Then Brahmā Prajāpati said to Skanda: 'Go to thy *father Mahādeva*, the vexer of Tripura. Thou, unconquered, hast been produced for the good of all worlds by Rudra, who had entered into Agni, and Umā, who had entered into Svāhā.'"

The allusion to Rudra's entering into Agni is explained in the Ramayana. The gods, fearing that the descendants of such a pair as Siva and Pārvati would be too dreadful to live with, prevented those deities not to have offspring. Siva consented, but Umā being angry, declared that as she could not have children the other goddesses should suffer similar deprivation. Unfortunately, the gods came too late to prevent the production of Kartikeya; the germ from which he was born having been received by the earth. Agni and Vāyu entered it, and deposited it with Gangā, the sister of Umā, and thus this deity was produced.

The 'Siva Purāna'* gives a different account of his origin, and teaches that he was produced to effect the destruction of Tārika. This demon, who was King of Tripura, was "exceedingly

* Moor's 'Hindu Pantheon,' p. 5[illegible].

[illegible] and oppressive. He forced Brahmā, by his penance [illegible] austerities, to promise him any boon that he should demand. [illegible] his austerities he went through the following series [illegible] of the eleven specific mortifications continuing 100 years:—1. He stood on one foot, holding the other and both hands up toward heaven, with his eyes fixed on the sun. 2. He stood on one great toe. 3. He took only water as sustenance. 4. He lived similarly on air. 5. He remained in water. 6. He was buried in the earth, but continued as under the last infliction, in incessant adoration. 7. The same in fire. 8. He stood on his head. 9. He hung on a tree by his hands. 10. He bore the weight of his body on one hand. 11. He hung on a tree with his head downwards.*

Such merit was irresistible, and Indra and a host of demi-gods, alarmed lest their sovereignty should be usurped through the potency of this penance, resorted to Brahmā for consolation. Brahma, however, said that, although he could not resist such austerities, he would, after rewarding them by granting the boon demanded, devise a method of rendering it ultimately inoffensive to them.

"The demand by Tārika was that he should be unrivalled in strength, and that no hand should slay him but that of a son of Mahādeva. He now became so arrogant that Indra was forced to yield to him the white eight-headed horse Ukhisravas; Kuvera gave up his thousand sea-horses; the Rishis were compelled to resign the cow Kamdhenu, that yielded everything that could be wished. The Sun in dread gave no heat, and the moon in terror remained always at full. The winds blew as he dictated, and, in short, he usurped the entire management of the universe.

Nārada prophesied the marriage whence should arise the deliverer of the world; but at first Mahādeva could not be influenced with the passion of love. Indra persuaded Kāma to begin ambush, and contrived that Pārvati should be seen by Siva while engaged in the amiable and graceful act of gathering

* Many of these forms of penance are resorted to, with some modifications, at the present time: these devotees may be seen at Benares, and other [illegible]

flowers wherewith to decorate his image. Kama, accompanied by his wife Rati (Desire), and his bosom friend Vasanta (the Spring), took his aim, and launched an arrow at Mahadeva, who, enraged at the attempt (to interrupt his devotion), reduced Kama to ashes by a beam of fire that issued from his third eye. At length, however, by ardent devotion and austerities, Parvati propitiated Siva, and the deity consented to espouse his persevering devotee."

For some time after their marriage, as there was no child born to them, the distressed and disappointed deities who had been anxiously expecting a deliverer, renewed their lamentations and complaints.

"Agni arrived in the presence of Mahadeva, having been deputed to express the desires of the other gods, that he would provide them with a son, who should destroy Tarika. Siva had just left his wife, and Agni, assuming the form of a dove, received from Mahadeva the germ from which Kartikeya arose. Unable to carry this further, he let it fall into the Ganges, on the banks of which river arose a boy, beautiful as the moon, and bright as the sun, who was called Agnibhuva (produced from Agni), Skanda, Kartikeya, &c."

"It happened that six daughters (the Pleiades) of as many Rajas, coming to bathe, saw the boy, and each called him her son; and, offering the breast, the child assumed to himself six mouths, and received nurture from each; whence he is called Sasthimatriya (having six mothers). But in fact the child had no mother, for he came from his father alone. In course of time a conflict ensued between Kartikeya and Tarika, in which the demon was slain."

A story is told showing how Kartikeya was outwitted by his brother Ganesa. As the two brothers fell in love with two ladies named Siddhi and Buddhi, it was agreed that whoever should first travel round the world should have them. Ganesa vowed by his logical talents and aptness at quotation that he had done this, and obtained the prize long before his brother returned from his weary pilgrimage, to the disquiet of both families when Ganesa's sophistry was discovered.

We have still another account* of the origin of Kartikeya: "Siva emitted sparks of fire from his eyes, which, being thrown into the lake Saravana, became six infants, who were nursed by the wives of the Rishis, who are seen in the sky as the Pleiades. When Parvati saw these children, she was transported with their beauty, and embraced all of them together so forcibly that their six bodies became one; while their six heads and twelve arms remained."

Kartikeya is better known in South India under the name of Subramanya. The 'Skanda Purāna' gives a full account of his war with Sura, and relates how he was sent by his father to interrupt Daksha's sacrifice, and how, at the instigation of the latter, he was delayed on his journey by beautiful damsels, who entertained him with dance and song. Hence it is the practice for dancing girls who are attached to the pagodas, to be betrothed and married to him; and, though allowed to prostitute themselves, cannot re-marry.

* Garrett's 'Classical Dictionary of India.'

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CHAPTER IX.

THE PURĀNIC ACCOUNT OF THE CREATION.

BEFORE passing on to the inferior deities, an account of the creation will be given. It is not at all easy to give a consistent account from the Hindu Scriptures, because the imaginations of the writers seem to have run wild on this subject; not having any authority, each writer has written what seemed good to himself. As in the accounts of the deities, the germs of what occupies a large space in the more recent, are found in the older books. The following hymn from the Rig-Veda * describes the primal condition of things before the creative power of the Deity was exercised:—

"There was neither aught nor naught, nor air, nor sky beyond.
What covered all? Where rested all? In watery gulf profound?
Nor death was then, nor deathlessness, nor change of night and day.
The One breathed calmly, self-sustained; nought else beyond it lay.

"Gloom, hid in gloom, existed first—one sea, eluding view.
That One, a void in chaos wrapt, by inward fervour grew.
Within it first arose desire, the primal germ of mind,
Which nothing with existence links, as sages searching find.

"The kindling ray that shot across the dark and drear abyss—
Was it beneath? or high aloft? What bard can answer this?
There fecundating powers were found, and mighty forces strove—
A self-supporting mass beneath, and energy above.

"Who knows, who ever told, from whence this vast creation rose?
So gods had then been born—who then can e'er the truth disclose?
Whence sprang this world, and whether framed by hand divine or not—
Its lord in heaven alone can tell, if even he can show."

* Mūl. O. S. T., v. 356.

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This hymn contains perhaps the earliest speculations of the Hindus respecting the creation that have come down to us; and the wise conclusion was arrived at that God alone knew how the world came into being. But as time went on this confession of ignorance did not satisfy the cravings of the human mind: hence succeeding ages sought by its conjectures, which are given with the assurance of exact knowledge, to throw light upon the unknowable.

The next quotation is from the 'Purusha Sakta' of the Rig-Veda, which from its thought and language is generally believed to be of much later origin than the preceding hymn.

"Purusha has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet. On every side enveloping the earth, he overpassed (it) by a space of ten fingers. Purusha himself is this whole (universe), whatever has been and whatever shall be. He is also lord of immortality, since (or when) by food he expands. All existences are a quarter of him, and three-fourths of him are that which is immortal in the sky. With three-quarters Purusha mounted upward. A quarter of him was again produced here. From him was born Virāj; and from Virāj, Purusha. When the gods performed a sacrifice, with Purusha as the oblation, the spring was its butter, the summer its fuel, and the autumn its (accompanying) offering. From that universal sacrifice were provided curds and butter. From that universal sacrifice sprang the Rich and Sāman verses, the metres and the Yajush; from it sprang horses and all animals with two rows of teeth, kine, goats and sheep. When (the gods) divided Purusha, into how many parts did they cut him up? The Brāhman was his mouth, the Rājanya was made his arms, the being (called) Vaisya was his thighs, and the Sudra sprang from his feet. The moon sprang from his soul (manas), the sun from his eye, Indra and Agni from his mouth, and Vāyu from his breath. From his navel arose the air, from his head the sky, from his feet the earth, from his ear the (four) quarters; in this manner (the gods) formed the worlds."*

* Muir, O. S. T., i. 9.

[illegible] follows an extract from the 'Satapatha Brāhmana' which gives the words used at the creation. "[illegible] 'bhūh,' Prajāpati generated this earth. (Uttering) 'bhuvah,' he generated the air; and (uttering) 'svah,' he generated the sky. This universe is co-extensive with these worlds. Saying 'bhūh,' Prajāpati generated the Brāhman; (saying) 'bhuvah,' he generated the Kshattra; (and saying) 'svah,' he generated the Vis. All this world is as much as the Brāhman, Kshattra and Vis. (Saying) 'bhūh,' Prajāpati generated himself; (saying) 'bhuvah,' he generated offspring; (saying) 'svah,' he generated animals. This world is so much as self, offspring, and animals."

The 'Taittiriya Brāhmana' says, "This entire (universe) has been created by Brahma," and gives an account of the creation of the Asuras, Pitṛis (or fathers), and gods. "Prajāpati desired 'May I propagate.' He practised austerity. His breath became alive. With that breath (asu) he created Asuras. Having created the Asuras, he regarded himself as a father. After that he created the fathers (pitris). That constitutes the fatherhood of the fathers. Having created the fathers, he reflected. After that he created men. That constitutes the manhood of men. He who knows the manhood of men becomes intelligent. To him, when he was creating men, day appeared in the heavens. After that he created the gods."†

The 'Satapatha Brāhmana' relates the creation of men and animals. "Prajāpati was formerly this (universe) only [illegible] desired, 'Let me create food, and be propagated.' He [illegible] animals from his breaths, a man from his soul, a horse [illegible] eye, a bull from his breath, a sheep from his [illegible] a [illegible] voice. Since he formed animals from his b[illegible] say, 'The breaths are animals.' The sou[illegible] Since he formed a man from his soul, [illegible] is the first of the animals and the strong[illegible] breaths; for all the breaths depend u[illegible] formed man from his soul, therefore [illegible] animals;' for all these are man's."‡

* Muir, C. S. [illegible] † Ibid [illegible]

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another passage this Brahmana gives quite a different account. Purusha, as the soul of the universe, was alone. Hence "he did not enjoy happiness. He desired a second. He caused this same self to fall asunder into two parts. Thence arose a husband and wife. From them men were born. She reflected: 'How does he, after having produced me from himself, cohabit with me? Ah! let me disappear!' She became a cow, and the other a bull; from them kine were produced. The one became a mare, the other a stallion; the one a she-ass, the other a male ass. From them the class of animals with undivided hoofs was produced. The one became a she-goat, the other a he-goat; the one an ewe, the other a ram. From them goats and sheep were produced. In this manner pairs of all creatures whatsoever, down to ants, were created."*

Again this Brāhmana says: "Prajāpati created living beings. From his upper vital airs he created the gods; from his lower vital airs, mortal creatures."†

Manu's account of the creation most probably follows the preceding one in order of time; and it will be noticed that he has developed some germs of thought expressed there. "He (the self-existent) having felt desire, and willing to create various living beings from his own body, first created the waters, and threw into them a seed. That seed became a golden egg, of [illegible] equal to the Sun; in it he himself was born as Brahmā, the parent of all the world. The waters are called narah, for they are sprung from Nara; and as they were his first sphere of motion (ayana-kath), he is therefore called Nārayana. Produced [illegible] imperceptible, eternal, existent and non-existent cause, [illegible] is celebrated in the world as Brahmā. After [illegible] the egg, the glorious being, by his own [illegible] remain. . . . Having divided his own body [illegible] (Brahmā) became, with the half a male, [illegible] female; and in her he created Viraj. Know, [illegible] born men, that I, whom that male Viraj [illegible] creator of all this world."

* [illegible]

† Vishnu Purana,' p. 31.

The Purānas enter very minutely into the details of the creation. This is one of the specified topics of which a Purāna ought to treat. The first Book of the 'Vishnu Purāna' is largely filled with the accounts of this work. In his preface* to the translation of the 'Vishnu Purana,' Wilson says: "The first book of the six into which the work is divided is occupied chiefly with the details of creation, primary and secondary; the first explaining how the universe proceeds from Prakriti, or eternal crude matter; the second, in what manner the forms of things are developed from the elementary substance previously evolved, or how they reappear after their temporary destruction. Both these creations are periodical, but the termination of the first occurs only at the end of the life of Brahmā; when not only all the gods and other forms are annihilated, but the elements are again merged into primary substance; besides which one only spiritual being exists; the latter takes place at the end of every Kalpa, a day of Brahmā, and affects only the forms of inferior creatures and lower worlds, leaving the substance of the universe entire, and sages and gods unharmed."

The account in the 'Vishnu Purāna' was, according to that authority, "originally imparted by the great father of all (Brahmā) in answer to the questions of Daksha and other venerable sages, and repeated by them to Purukutsa, a king who reigned on the banks of the Narmadā."† "Who can describe him who is not to be apprehended by the [illegible]? He is Brahma, supreme, lord, eternal, unborn, in[illegible]ble. He then existed in the form of Purusha and o[illegible] (Spirit) is the first form of the supreme; [illegible] other forms, the discreet and indiscreet; [illegible] the last. These four—Pradhāna (prim[illegible] Purusha (Spirit), Vyakta (visible substa[illegible] in their due proportions, are the cau[illegible] the phenomena of creation, preservati[illegible] supreme Brahma, the supreme so[illegible] World, the lord of all creatures, the [illegible]

* 'Vishnu Purāna,' p. 39.

[illegible] (Vishnu) of his own will [illegible] spirit, agitated the mutable and [illegible] principles, the [illegible] of creation having arrived, in the same manner as [illegible] affects the mind from its proximity merely, and not from any immediate operation upon mind itself; so the supreme influenced the elements of creation."

After giving an account of the creation, or rather the evolution of the elements, the 'Vishnu Pūrāna' † goes on to say: "Then (the elements) ether, air, light, water and earth, severally united with the properties of sound, and the rest existed as distinguishable according to their qualities as soothing, terrific, or stupifying; but possessing various energies, and being unconnected, they could not without combination create living beings, not having blended with each other. Having combined, therefore, with one another, they assumed, through their mutual association, the character of one mass of entire unity; and from the direction of spirit, with the acquiescence of the indiscrete principle, intellect, and the rest, to the gross elements inclusive, formed an egg, which gradually expanded like a bubble of water. This vast egg, compounded of the elements and resting on the waters, was the excellent natural abode of Vishnu in the form of Brahmā; and there Vishnu, the lord of the universe, whose essence is inscrutable, assumed a perceptible form, and even he himself abided in it in the character of Brahmā. Its womb, vast as [illegible] mountain Meru, was composed of the mountains; and the [illegible] oceans were the waters that filled its cavity [illegible] the continents and seas and mountains, the [illegible] of the universe, the gods, demons, and [illegible]

[illegible] quality of activity, Hari the lord of all, [illegible] Brahmā, engaged in the creation of the [illegible] the quality of goodness and of im- [illegible] created things through successive [illegible] period termed a Kalpa; when the [illegible] with the quality of darkness,

† Page 18.

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assumes the [illegible] of [illegible], and swallows up the universe. Having thus [illegible] things, and converted the world into one vast ocean, the [illegible] reposes upon his mighty serpent couch amidst the deep. He awakes after a season, and again as Brahmā becomes the author of creation."

The Purāna next gives an account of the creation in the present Kalpa or age. This is a secondary creation, for water and the earth also are already in existence; it is not creation in its proper signification, but the change of pre-existing matter into the forms we now see. Vishnu knew that the earth lay hidden in the waters; he therefore, assuming the form of a boar,* raised it upon his tusks.

In answer to a request for a full account of the creation of gods and other beings, the following passages occur:†—"Created beings, although they are destroyed (in their original forms) at the periods of dissolution, yet, being affected by the good or evil acts of former existence, are never exempted from their consequences; and when Brahmā creates the world anew, they are the progeny of his will, in the fourfold condition of gods, men, animals, and inanimate things. Brahmā then being desirous of creating the four orders of beings—termed gods, demons, progenitors, and men—collected his mind into itself.

"*Whilst thus concentrated, the quality of darkness pervaded his body, and thence the demons (the Asuras) were first born, issuing from his thigh.* Brahmā then abandoned that [illegible] which was composed of the rudiment of darkness, and which being deserted by him, became night. Continuing to create [illegible] assuming a different shape, he experienced pleasure, and [illegible] from his mouth proceeded the gods. The form abandoned by him became day, in which the good quality predominates; and hence by day the gods are most powerful, and by night the demons. He now adopted another person (form) in which the rudiment of good men also prevailed; and thinking of himself as the father of the world, the progenitors (or Pitris) were born from his side. The body, when he abandoned it, became the

* See *ante*, p. [illegible]

† 'Vishnu Purāna,' p. 39.

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Sandhya, or evening twilight. Brahmā then assumed another person, pervaded by the quality of foulness; and from this, men in whom foulness (or passion) predominates, were produced. Quickly abandoning that body, it became the dawn. At the appearance of this light of day men feel most vigour; whilst the progenitors are most powerful in the evening.

"Next from Brahmā, in a form composed of the quality of foulness, was produced hunger, of whom anger was born; and the god put forth in darkness beings emaciated with hunger, of hideous aspect and with long beards. These beings hastened to the deity. Such of them as exclaimed, 'Oh preserve us,' were thence called Rākshasas (from Raksha, to preserve); others who cried out, 'Let us eat,' were denominated from that expression Yakshas (from Yaksha, to eat). Beholding them so disgusting, the hairs of Brahmā were shrivelled up, and first falling from his head were again renewed upon it; from their falling they became serpents, called Sarpa (Srip, to creep), from their creeping, and Ahi (from Hā, to abandon), because they had deserted the head. The creator of the world, being incensed, then created fierce beings, who were denominated goblins, Bhutas, malignant fiends, and eaters of flesh. The Gandharvas (choristers) were next born; imbibing melody, drinking of the goddess of speech, they were born, and hence their appellation.

"The divine Brahmā, influenced by their natural energies, having created these beings, made others of his own will. Birds he formed from his vital vigour; sheep from his heart; goats from his mouth; kine from his belly and sides; and horses, elephants, sarabhas, gayals, deer, camels, asses, antelopes, and other animals from his feet: whilst from the hairs of his body sprang herbs, roots, and fruits." In this manner beings are said to have sprung from Brahmā; they were in him in the egg: hence this is an account of evolution, rather than of creation. The creation of man, as divided into four castes, is described in this Purāna, in similar terms to those of Manu.

Following this is the account of the mind-born sons of Brahmā—Bhrigu, Daksha, and others—nine in number, who became the

progenitors of their race. Next "Brahmā created himself as Manu Swayambhu, born [illegible] and identical with his original self, for the protection of created beings: and the female portion of himself he constituted [illegible] Śatarūpā, whom austerity purified from the sin (forbidden nuptials) and whom the divine Manu Swayambhu took to wife." After this follows a long account of the descendants of these mind-born sons; and it is then shown how by the production of the Amṛita at the churning of the ocean the gods obtained immortality, and the work of creation for this age was complete.

With some variations this is the story of the creation as told in the Purāṇas; though in some prominence is given to parts that are only lightly touched upon here, whilst some incidents are more fully described here than in some of the other Purāṇas.

[illegible] See Part III, chap. [illegible].

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CHAPTER X.

THE PURĀNIC DIVISIONS OF TIME.

THE three main divisions of time employed in the Hindu Scriptures, are YUGAS, MANVANTARAS, and KALPAS.* These will now be described.

There are four Yugas, which together extend to 12,000 *divine years*. Their respective duration is as follows:—

The Kṛta Yuga	= 4,800	divine years.
The Tretā Yuga	= 3,600	„ „
The Dvāpara Yuga	= 2,400	„ „
The Kali Yuga	= 1,200	„ „

"One year of mortals is equal to one day of the gods." As 360 is taken as the number of days in the year:

The Kṛta Yuga	= 4,800 × 360 = 1,728,000	years of mortals.
The Tretā Yuga	= 3,600 × 360 = 1,296,000	„ „
The Dvāpara Yuga	= 2,400 × 360 = 864,000	„ „
The Kali Yuga	= 1,200 × 360 = 432,000	„ „

The Mahāyuga, or age, including all the four lesser Yugas, therefore, being 12,000 divine years = 4,320,000 years of mortals. "A thousand such Mahāyugas are a day of Brahmā," and his nights are of equal duration; a *Kalpa*, therefore, or day of Brahmā extends over 4,320,000,000 ordinary years. Within each Kalpa 14 Manus reign; a Manvantara, or period of a Manu, therefore, is consequently $\frac{1}{14}$ part of a Kalpa, or day of Brahmā.

* See 'Vishnu Purāna,' Book i. chap. iii., and Book vi. chap. i.
† Muir, O. S. T., i. 43.

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"In the present Kalpa, six Manes, of whom Swyambhuva was the first, have already passed away; the present being Vaivaswata. In each Manvantara (or period of a Manu), seven Rishis, certain deities, an Indra and a Manu, and the kings, his sons, are created and perish. A thousand systems of the four Yugas occur coincidentally with these fourteen Manvantaras, and consequently about 71 systems of four Yugas elapse during each Manvantara, and measure the lives of the Manus and the deities of the period. At the close of this day of Brahmā, a collapse of the universe takes place, which lasts through a night of Brahmā, equal in duration to his day, during which period the three worlds are converted into one great ocean, when the lotus-born god (Brahmā), expanded by his deglutition of the universe, and contemplated by the Yogis and gods in Janaloka, reposes on the serpent Sesha. At the end of that night he awakes and creates anew.

"A year of Brahmā is composed of the proper number of such days and nights, and a hundred of such years constitute his whole life. The period of his life is called *Para*, and the half of it *Parārddha*, or the half of a *Para*. One Parārddha, or half of Brahmā's existence, has now expired, terminating with the great Kalpa, called the Padma Kalpa. The now existing Kalpa, or day of Brahmā, called Varāhar (or that of the boar), is the first of the second Parārddha of Brahmā's existence. The dissolution which occurs at the end of each Kalpa, or day of Brahmā, is called *naimittika*, incidental, occasional, or contingent."*

The dissolution of existing beings is of three kinds, "incidental, elemental, and absolute."† The first is *naimittika*, occasional, incidental, or Brāhmya, as occasioned by the intervals of Brahmā's days; the destruction of creatures, though not of the substance of the world, occurring during the night. The second is the general resolution of the elements into their primitive source, or Prakriti, the Prākritika destruction, which occurs at the end of Brahmā's life. The third, the absolute or final, Atyantika, is individual annihilation, Moksha, exemption for ever from future existence.

* Muir, O. S. T., i. 45. † 'Vishnu Purana,' p. 630, note.

The process of destruction is described as follows:—

"At the end of a thousand periods of ages the earth is to the most part exhausted. A total death then ensues, which lasts a hundred years, and in consequence of the failure of food all beings become languid and exanimate, and at last entirely perish. The eternal Vishnu then assumes the character of Rudra, the destroyer, and descends to reunite all his creatures with himself. He enters into the seven rays of the sun, drinks up all the waters of the globe, and causes all moisture whatever, in living bodies or in the soil, to evaporate, thus drying up the whole earth. The seas, the rivers, the mountain torrents, and springs are all exhaled, and so are all the waters of Pātāla, the regions below the earth. Thus fed, through his intervention, with abundant moisture, the seven solar rays dilate into seven suns, whose radiance glows above, below, and on every side, and sets the three worlds and Pātāla on fire. The three worlds, consumed by these suns, become jagged and deformed throughout the whole extent of their mountains, rivers, and seas; and the earth, bare of verdure and destitute of moisture, alone remains, resembling in appearance the back of a tortoise. The destroyer of all things, Hari, in the form of Rudra, with the flame of time, becomes the scorching breath of the serpent Śesha, and thereby reduces Pātāla to ashes. The great fire, having burnt all the divisions of Pātāla, proceeds to the earth and consumes it also. A vast whirlpool of eddying flame then spreads to the region of the atmosphere and the sphere of the stars, and wraps them in ruin. The three spheres show like a frying-pan amidst the surrounding flames, that prey upon all moving or stationary things. The inhabitants of the two upper worlds, having discharged their functions and being annoyed by the heat, remove to the sphere above, or Maharloka. When that region is heated, its tenants, who, after the full period of their existence, are desirous of ascending to higher regions, depart for the Janaloka."*

The 'Vāyu Purāna' † gives more explicit teaching on this subject.

* 'Vishnu Purāna,' p. 631. † Ibid. p. 632, note.

"Those sinless Rishis who have diligently worshipped Vishnu and are distinguished for piety, abide at the time of dissolution in Maharloka, with the Aditis, the Manus, the seven Rishis, the various orders of celestial Spirits and the gods. These, when the heat of the flames that destroy the world reaches to Maharloka, repair to Janaloka in their subtle forms, destined to become re-embodied in similar capacities as their former, when the world is renewed, at the beginning of the succeeding Kalpa. This continues throughout the life of Brahmā; at the expiration of his life all are destroyed; but those who have then attained a residence in the Brahmaloka, by having identified themselves in spirit with the Supreme, are finally resolved into the sole existing Brahma."

The 'Vishnu Purāna'* continues as follows: "Janārddana, in the person of Rudra, having consumed the whole world, breathes forth heavy clouds. Mighty in size and loud in thunder, they fill all space. Showering down torrents of water, these clouds quench the dreadful fires which involve the three worlds, and then they rain uninterruptedly for a hundred years and deluge the whole world. Pouring down in drops as large as dice, these rains overspread the earth, and fill the middle region and inundate heaven. The world is now enveloped in darkness, and all things, animate and inanimate, having perished, the clouds continue to pour down their waters for more than a hundred years."

The four Yugas mentioned above—viz., the Krita, Tretā, Dvāpara, and Kali—have characteristic qualities. The Krita is the golden, the Kali the iron age. The Mahābhārata† gives these characteristics very distinctly. Hanumān, the monkey-god, is the speaker, describing the four ages to Bhīmasena, one of the Pāndavas.

"The Krita is that age in which righteousness is eternal. In the time of that most excellent of Yugas (everything) had been done (*Kritā*), and nothing (remained) to be done. Duties did not then languish, nor did the people decline. Afterwards through (the influence of) time, this Yuga fell into a state of inferiority. In that age there were neither gods, Danavas,

* Page 63.

† Muir, O. S. T., i. 143.

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PART III.

THE INFERIOR DEITIES

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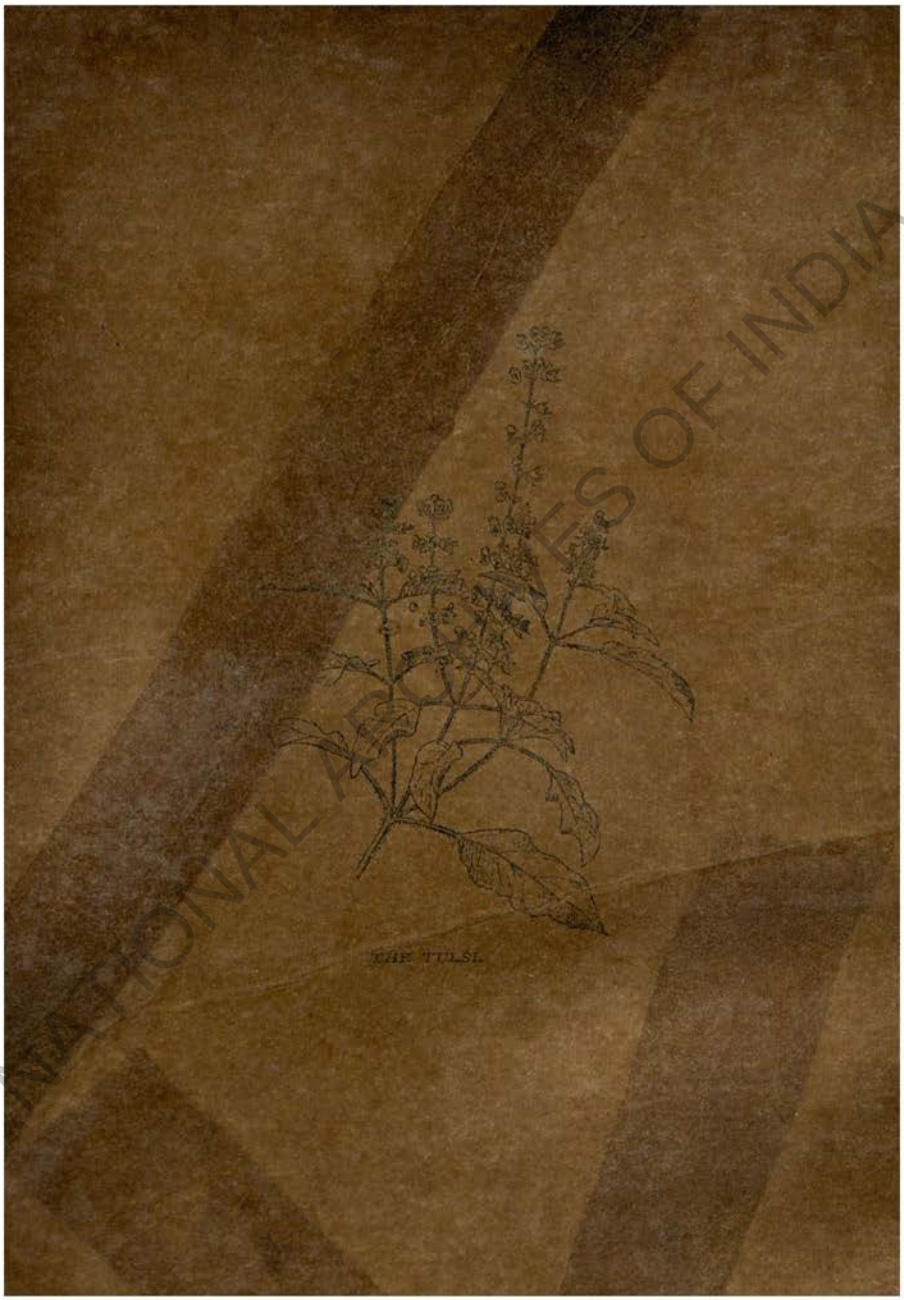

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THE INFERIOR DEITIES.

CHAPTER I.

THE DIVINE RISHIS.

1. BHRIGU.

"WHEN Brahmā wished to populate the world, he mind-born sons, like himself; viz. Bhrigu, Pulastya Kratu, Angiras, Marichi, Daksha, Atri, and Vasishtha the nine Brahmās or Brahmarishis celebrated in the Originally seven were mentioned in the Mahābhār lists found in different parts of that Epic do no each other. These seven are supposed to be visibl Bear, as their wives shine in the Pleiades. The are also called Prajāpatis (lords of offspring), Br of Brahmā), and Brāhmanas. The 'Vishnu P Bhrigu married his niece Khyāti, a daughte to him Sri or Lakshmi; but as it was the was one of the products of the churning of the Purāna is asked to explain this d of his answer was, that "of gods, a that is called male, Lakshmi is all

In his account of the creation as having been created by hi in his turn created seven othe sprung.† The Mahābharat

* 'Vishnu Purāna,' p.

as the mind-born son of Brahmā," but Bhrigu is not named amongst them. In another passage it describes him as a son of Varuna, but Brahmā is there identified with Varuna. At a sacrifice at which Brahmā officiated, a portion of Varuna was thrown into the sacrificial fire, whence there arose three men endowed with bodies. Bhrigu sprang first from *bhrik* (the blazing of the fire), Angiras from the cinders, and Kavi from a heap of ashes. The god called Mahādeva, Varuna, and Pavana, claimed these three as his own. Agni and Brahmā also claimed them.* It was agreed that Bhrigu was Varuna's son, Agni received Angiras, and Brahmā took Kavi. In another part of that poem it is said: "We have heard that the great and venerable Rishi Bhrigu was produced by Brahmā [illegible] fire at the sacrifice of Varuna." † The 'Bhāgavata Purāna' [illegible] that "he sprang from the skin of the Creator;" and the [illegible]bhārata, in another verse, declares that "the venerable [illegible] having split Brahmā's heart, issued forth."

[illegible] great sacrifice of Daksha, to which Siva was not [illegible]rigu officiated as priest; and because he reviled that [illegible] followers, and justified Daksha in slighting him, he [illegible] loss of his beard.

[illegible]bhārata gives a legend of Bhrigu, cursing Indra. [illegible]hat age, named Nahusha, being filled with pride, [illegible]f his previous good works, and in his presump[illegible] Rishis to carry him about. When it came to [illegible]arry him, Bhrigu said to him, "Why do we [illegible]f this wicked king of the gods?" Agastya [illegible] Rishis had cursed Nahusha, because he [illegible]e power to subject to his service any [illegible]; but that at the same time he was [illegible]y suggestion Bhrigu might make. [illegible]ad been sent by Brahmā to take [illegible]ld that very day attach Agastya [illegible]sed at this insult, he (Bhrigu) [illegible]essor to become a serpent.

† Ibid.

The mighty Nahusha summoned Agastya from the banks of the Sarasvati to carry him. The glorious Bhrigu then said to Maitrāvaruṇa (Agastya): "Close thy eyes, whilst I enter into the knot of thy hair!" With the view of overthrowing the king, Bhrigu entered into the hair of Agastya, who stood motionless as a stock. Nahusha came to be carried by Agastya, who desired to be attached to the vehicle, and agreed to carry the king of the gods wherever he pleased. Nahusha attached him; but Bhrigu in Agastya's hair did not venture to look at him, knowing his power of subduing by a glance. Agastya did not lose his temper; even when urged by a goad, he remained unmoved. The king at last kicked him; when Bhrigu, invisible in the hair of Agastya, became enraged, and violently cursed him: "Since, fool, thou hast in thine anger smitten the great Muni on the head with thy foot, therefore become a serpent, and fall swiftly to the earth."* Thus cursed by the invisible Bhrigu, Nahusha fell to the earth; had the sage been seen by Indra, he would have been unable to punish the oppressor.

Bhrigu on another occasion cursed Agni. The Mahābhārata says:—A woman named Puloma was betrothed to a demon; Bhrigu, seeing her beauty, married her according to Vedic rites, and carried her off secretly. The demon, by the aid of Agni, discovered the bride's hiding-place, and took her away to his home. For rendering the demon aid in the search, Bhrigu, cursing Agni, said, "From this day, you shall eat everything." Agni asked Bhrigu why he had cursed him, seeing that he had spoken the truth, and that in doing this he had simply done his duty; and reminded him that "when a person is asked a question, and intentionally speaks what is false, he, with seven preceding and seven succeeding generations, is cast into hell; and that he who withholds information is equally guilty." He goes on to say: "I, too, can curse, but respecting Brāhmans restrain my anger. I am really the mouth of the gods and ancestors. When ghi is offered to them, they partake of it through me as their mouth; how then can I be said to eat everything?" Bhrigu hearing this

* Muir, O. S. T., i. 514.

consented to modify his curse by saying that, "as the Sun by his light and heat purifies all nature, so Agni should purify all that passed through him."

Bhrigu is said to have performed a most wonderful deed; the transforming of a Kshattriya king into a Brāhman. The Mahābhārata* gives the following account of this unique work:—"Divodāsa, King of Kāsi (Benares), was attacked by the sons of Vitāhavya, and all his family slain in battle. The afflicted monarch therefore resorted to the sage Bharadvāja, who performed for him a sacrifice, in consequence of which a son named Pratardana was born to him. Pratardana, becoming an accomplished warrior, was sent by his father to take vengeance on the Vitāhavyas. Vitāhavya had now to fly to another sage, Bhrigu, who promised his protection. The avenger Pratardana, however, followed, and demanded that the refugee should be given up. Bhrigu, the most eminent of religious men, filled with compassion, said: 'There is no Kshattriya here; all these are Brāhmans.' Hearing this true assertion of Bhrigu, Pratardana was glad, and, gently touching the sage's feet, rejoined: 'Even thus, O glorious saint, I have gained my object, for I have compelled this king to relinquish his caste.' This Vitāhavya, by the mere word of Bhrigu, became a Brāhman Rishi, and an utterer of the Vedas."

The names of nineteen Bhrigus are given in the 'Matsya Purāna,' who are said to be composers of hymns; Bhrigu himself being one of the narrators of the Mahābhārata. Professor Roth† speaks of the Bhrigus as a class of mythological beings, who belonged to the aërial or middle class of gods. They were the discoverers of fire, and brought it to men. He adds that this name has also a connexion with history, as one of the chief Brāhmanical families bears this name, and allusions are made to them in the hymns of the Rig-Veda.

In the Rāmāyana there are not many references to Bhrigu; he is there called a Maharishi; and Rāma is induced to slay a Rākshasī demon by the remembrance that Vishnu slew Bhrigu's wife when she aspired to Indra's throne. He is the saint whom

* Muir, O. S. T., iv. 229. † Ibid. i. 442.

the childless wives of Sāgar worshipped in order to obtain a son; and he gave to one lady one, to the other sixty thousand. Parasurāma was one of his most illustrious descendants.

2. PULASTYA.

Pulastya, another of Brahmā's mind-born sons, is reverenced because it was through him that the Purānas were made known to men. The reason of his being regarded as the Reveder of Scripture is taught in the 'Vishnu Purāna,' where the narrator Parāsara, in answer to a question addressed to him by his disciple Maitreya, says: "You recall to my mind what was of old narrated by my father's father Vasishtha. I had heard that my father had been devoured by a Rākshas, employed by Visvamitra: violent anger seized me, and I commenced a sacrifice for the destruction of the Rākshasas; hundreds of them were reduced to ashes by the rite, when, as they were about to be entirely extirpated, my grandfather Vasishtha thus spake to me: 'Enough, my child; let thy wrath be appeased; the Rākshasas are not culpable: thy father's death was the work of destiny.'"

Parāsara ceased from his sacrifice, and his grandfather was pleased; then Pulastya coming said to him: "Since, in the violence of animosity, you have listened to the words of your progenitor, and exercised clemency, you shall become learned in every science. Since you have forborne, even though incensed, to destroy my posterity, I will bestow on you another boon; you shall become the author of a summary of the Purānas, shall know the true nature of the deities, and your understanding through my favour shall be perfect and free from doubts." Parāsara relates the Purāna as told him formerly "by Vasishtha and the wise Pulastya."

Pulastya married Prithi, a daughter of Daksha, by whom he had a son, the sage Agastya; the Bhāgavata calls his wife Havirbhu, whose sons were Agastya and Visravas, the father of Kuvera, Rāvana, and other Rākshasas.

The reason of Parāsara's attack upon the Rākshasas is given in a legend in the Mahābhārata. King Kalmāshapada, meeting with Sakti (Parāsara's father) in a narrow path in a forest, wished him to get out of his way. This the sage refused to do; whereupon the king thrashed him with his whip; in return Sakti cursed him, and he became a cannibal Rākshas. When in this form, the king killed and ate Sakti and all the other sons of Vasishtha. Sakti's wife being pregnant at the time of his death, Parāsara was born soon after and brought up with his grandfather. When he grew up, he commenced the slaughter of the Rākshasas, but was restrained by Vasishtha, Pulastya, and others.

3. PULAHA.

This Rishi does not figure largely in Hindu mythology. He married a daughter of Daksha named Kshamā (Patience), by whom he had three sons.

4. KRATU.

Kratu is no more widely known than Pulaha. He married Sannati (Humility), another daughter of Daksha, by whom he had "sixty thousand Bālakhilyas, pigmy sages no bigger than the joint of the thumb; chaste, pious, and resplendent as the rays of the sun."*

5. ANGIRAS.

Angiras is famed as the author of several hymns of the Rig-Veda. He first married Smriti (Memory), by whom he had four daughters, and afterwards he married Swaddha (Oblation) and Sati, also Daksha's daughters. His so-called daughters, the Pratyangirasa Richas, are thirty-five verses addressed to presiding divinities. There is some ambiguity in the use of his name; it comes from the same root as Agni, of which deity it is used as an epithet; it is also used of Agni's father, and is the name of a son of Agneya, Agni's daughter. Angiras is supposed to have been associated with Bhrigu in introducing fire-worship into India.

* 'Vishnu Purāna,' p. 83.

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6. MARICHI.

Marichi is better known through his descendants than from any work of his own, his most illustrious child being Kasyapa, as a son of whom Vishnu came, in his incarnation as a dwarf. Amongst Kasyapa's thirteen wives were Diti and Aditi, who by him became the mothers of gods. "There were twelve celebrated deities in a former age called Tushitas, who, on the approach of the present period, or during the reign of the last Manu Chakshusa, said amongst themselves, 'Come, let us quickly enter into the womb of Aditi, that we may be born in the next Manvantara, for thereby we shall again enjoy the rank of gods;' and accordingly they were born the sons of Kasyapa, the son of Marichi by Aditi; thence named the twelve Adityas, whose names were Vishnu, Sakra, Aryaman, Dhati, Tvastri, Pushan, Vivasvat, Savitri, Mitra, Varuna, Ansa, and Bhaga."*

An explanation of the fact that gods undergo successive births is found in the 'Vāyu Purāna.' "In the beginning of the Kalpa, twelve gods, named Jayas, were created by Brahma as his deputies and assistants in creation. They, lost in meditation, neglected his commands, on which he declared that they should be reborn in each Manvantara until the seventh.† The writer of the 'Vishnu Purāna' tries to explain this fact: "These classes of divinities are born again at the end of a thousand ages according to their own pleasure, and their appearance and disappearance are spoken of as birth and death; but they exist age after age in the same manner as the sun sets and rises again."

By his wife Diti, Kasyapa had two sons, Hiranyakasipu and Hiranyaksha, whom Vishnu, here said to be the son of her sister Aditi, became incarnate to destroy; these mortal enemies were therefore cousins.

7. ATRI.

Atri was the author of many Vedic hymns, especially those praising Agni, Indra, the Asvins, and the Viswa-devas." He

* 'Vishnu Purana,' p. 122. † Page 125.

married Anasúya, who bore him Durvása, the sage who was slighted by Indra. Soma, the moon, is said to proceed from the eyes of his father Atri.

When this sage and his wife were old, they received a visit at their hermitage from Rāma, Sita, and Lakshman, who were then wandering from place to place:—

> "He came to Atri's pure retreat,
> Paid reverence to his holy feet;
> And from the saint such welcome won
> As a fond father gives his son." *

Atri, in introducing his wife to his illustrious guests, thus describes her:—

> "Ten thousand years this votaress bent
> On sternest rites of penance spent;
> She, when the clouds withheld their rain,
> And drought ten years consumed the plain,
> Caused grateful roots and fruits to grow
> And ordered Gangā here to flow;
> So from their cares the saints she freed,
> Nor let these checks their rights impede.
> She wrought in heaven's behalf, and made
> Ten nights of one, the gods to aid." †

Anasúyā then joins with her husband in welcoming the exiles to their hermitage, and, delighted with the princess, tells her to ask a boon. As, however, Sita appeared to want nothing particular, the aged saint said:—

> "My gift to-day
> Thy sweet contentment shall repay:
> Accept this precious robe to wear,
> Of heavenly fabric, rich and rare;
> These gems thy limbs to ornament,
> This precious balsam sweet of scent.
> O Maithil dame! this gift of price
> Shall make thy limbs with beauty shine,
> And, breathing o'er thy frame, dispense
> Its pure and lasting influence.

* Griffith's Ramayan, ii. 153. † Ibid. ii. 173.

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[illegible] on thy fair limbs spread,
[illegible] on thy lord shall shed.
[illegible]shmi's beauty lends a grace
[illegible]eshu's own celestial face."*

DAKSHA.

Daksha, the father of Umā the consort of Siva, has attained pre-eminence amongst his [illegible]ren largely through the greatness of his son-in-law. He too is a mind-born son of Brahmā; or, according to other accounts, sprang from the thumb of his father. He is one of the chief Prajāpatis. Before speaking of Daksha, as the term Prajāpati is of frequent occurrence, it will not be out of place here to describe the position of these beings.

DAKSHA.

The term Prajāpati means a lord of creatures; the Prajāpatis, therefore, are regarded as the progenitors of mankind. The word is used in much the same manner as Patriarch in the Christian Scriptures. Sometimes Brahmā alone is [illegible] by the term Prajāpati; he is *the* "lord of creatures;" sometimes it is employed for the first-formed men from whom the human race sprung. The word was originally employed as an epithet of Savitri and Soma, as well as of Hiranyāgarbha, or Brahma. It afterwards, however, came to denote a separate deity, [illegible]

* Griffith's 'Rāmāyana,' ii. 474.

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appears in three names in the Rig Veda. Prajāpati is sometimes identified with the universe, and described in the same way as Brahma, or entity, or non-entity are (in other places) as having alone existed in the beginning, as the source out of which creation was evolved: "*e.g.*, Prajāpati was this universe; Vach was a second to him. She became pregnant; she departed from him, she produced these creatures. She again entered into Prajāpati." Yet at the same time he is "sometimes described as only a secondary or subordinate deity, and treated only as one of thirty-three deities."

By the time Manu wrote creation had come to be regarded as the special work of Brahmā, since the term Prajāpati is applied to him in the Dharmasastras, and in the later writings it is given to those who sprang from him, and carried on his work of peopling the world.

The Mahābhārata gives two distinct accounts of the origin of Daksha:†—"Daksha, the glorious Rishi, tranquil in spirit, and great in austere fervour, sprang from the right thumb of Brahmā. From the left thumb sprang the great Muni's wife, by whom he begot fifty daughters." "Born with all splendour, like that of the great Rishi, the ten sons of Prachetas (another Prajāpati) are reputed to have been virtuous and holy, and by them the glorious beings (trees, plants, &c.) were formerly burnt up by fire springing from their mouth. From them was born Daksha Prachetasa, and from Daksha, the parent of the world, (were produced) these creatures. Cohabiting with Virini, the Muni Daksha begat a thousand sons like himself, famous for their religious observances." In the Harivansa, Vishnu is identified with Daksha. At the end of a thousand Yugas the Brāhmans of a previous age, "perfect in knowledge and contemplation, were involved in the dissolution of the world. Then Vishnu sprang from Brahma, removed beyond the sphere of sense, absorbed in contemplation, became the Prajāpati Daksha, and created numerous creatures." ‡

Other particulars of Daksha's origin we find in the Vishnu

† Muir, O. S., I., v. 390. ‡ Ibid. i. 224. ‡ Ibid. i. 153.

Purāna,"* "Brahmā, continuing to meditate, were born mind-engendered progeny, with forms and faculties derived from his corporeal nature, embodied spirits produced from the person of that all-wise deity. Not as they did not multiply themselves, Brahmā created other mind-born sons like himself, viz. Bhrigu, &c. Considerable variety prevails in this list of Prajāpatis, but the variations are of the nature of additions made to an apparently original enumeration of but seven, whose names generally occur. The names mentioned in all the Purānas make up altogether seventeen. The simple statement that the first Prajāpatis sprang from the thought or will of Brahmā has not contented the depraved taste of the mystics, and in some of the Purānas, as the Bhāgavata, Vāyu and Linga, they are said to be derived from the body of their progenitor; Bhrigu from his skin, Marichi from his mind, Atri from his eyes, Angiras from his mouth, Pulastya from his ear, Pulaha from his naval, Kratu from his hand, Vasishtha from his breath, Daksha from his thumb, and Nārada from his lips. They do not exactly agree, however, in the [description of the places] whence these beings proceed."†

The 'Vishnu Purāna'‡ also speaks of Daksha as a son of the Prāchetasas, and gets over the difficulty by the statement that he was born first as a son of Brahmā, and afterwards as the son of the Prāchetasas. These progenitors of Daksha were the sons of a mighty patriarch named Prachinaverhis, so called 'from his placing upon the earth the sacred grass pointing to the East.' At the termination of a season of rigid penance, he married Savarnā, the daughter of the ocean, who had by him ten sons, styled Prāchetasas, who were skilled in military science. They all observed the same duties, practised religious austerities, and remained immersed in the bed of the sea for ten thousand years. The reason for this prolonged penance was the fact that their father had been enjoined by Brahmā to increase the human family. In harmony with his promise of obedience, he told his sons that the performance of severe penance was the best means of fulfilling Brahmā's order; "for whoever worships Vishnu, by

* Page 49. † Wilson in note, p. 49, 'Vishnu Purāna.' ‡ Page 116.

bestower of good, attains undoubtedly the object of his desires: there is no other mode."

As the sons were immersed in the ocean, intent on the worship of Vishnu, that deity appeared to them, and, hearing their request, said: "Receive the boon you have desired: for I, the giver of good, am content with you." Whilst the Prāchetasas were absorbed in their devotions, the trees grew and overshadowed the unprotected earth, the people perished, the winds could not blow, the sky was shut out from view by the boughs, and mankind unable to labour for ten thousand years. When the sages saw this, wind (which tore up the trees) and flames (which then consumed them) issued from their mouths, and the forests were soon cleared away. Soma, the sovereign of the vegetable world, seeing nearly all the trees destroyed, went to the patriarchs and said: "Restrain your indignation, and listen to me. I will make an alliance between you and the trees. Prescient of futurity, I have nourished this maiden, the daughter of the woods. She is called Mārishā, and, as your bride, she shall be the multiplier of the race of Druva. From a portion of your and my lustre the patriarch Daksha shall be born, who, endowed with a part of me and composed of your vigour, shall be resplendent as fire, and shall multiply the human race."

Soma then informs the brothers respecting Mārishā's origin. "There was formerly a sage named Kandu, eminent in wisdom and austerity, on the banks of the Gomati. Indra sent the nymph Pramlochā to divert the sage from his devotions: they lived together for 150 years, during which time the Muni was given up to pleasure. The nymph at the close of this period requested leave to depart, but the Muni entreated her to continue with him. And though at the end of several centuries she repeated the same request, again and again she was asked to remain.

"On one occasion, as the sage was going forth from their cottage in a great hurry, the nymph asked where he was going. 'The day,' he replied, 'is drawing fast to a close. I must perform the Sandhya worship, or a duty will be neglected.' The nymph smiled mirthfully as she rejoined: 'Why do you

talk, grave sir, of [illegible] day drawing to a close, your day is a day of many years, a day that must be a marvel to all; explain what this means.' The Muni said: 'Fair maiden, you came to the river-side at dawn. I beheld you then, and you entered the hermitage. It is now the revolution of evening, and the day is gone. What is the meaning of this laughter? Tell me the truth.' Pramlochā answered: 'You say rightly, venerable Brahman, that I came hither at the morning dawn, but several hundred years have passed since the time of my arrival. This is the truth.'" She informed him that they had lived together nine hundred and seven years, six months, and three days. The Muni sees now that the nymph must have been sent by Indra purposely to interrupt his devotions and deprive him of the divine knowledge he had desired. Although very angry with her at first, he bids her depart in peace, he says, "The sin is wholly mine."

"Thus addressed by the Muni, Pramlochā stood trembling, whilst big drops of perspiration started from every pore, till he angrily cried to her, 'Begone, begone!' She then, reproached by him, went forth from his dwelling, and, flying through the air, wiped the perspiration from her person with the leaves of the trees. The nymph went from tree to tree, and as with dusky shoots that crowned their summits she dried her limbs, which were covered with moisture, the child she had conceived by the Rishi came forth from the pores of her skin in drops of perspiration. The trees received the living dews, and the winds collected them into one mass. 'This,' said Soma, 'I nourished by my rays, and gradually it increased in size, till the embryo that had rested on the tree-tops became the lovely girl named Mārishā. The trees will give her to you, Prāchetasas; let your indignation be appeased. She is the progeny of Kandu, the daughter of Pramlochā, the nursling of the trees, the daughter of the sun and moon.'"

Soma then informs the Prāchetasas that Mārishā, in a previous birth, was the widow of a prince, but left childless. She therefore earnestly worshipped Vishnu, who told her to desire some boon. She replied: "I pray thee that in succeed-

ing births I may have honourable husbands and a son equal to a patriarch among men, [illegible] and may be born out of the ordinary course." Vishnu promised her that in another life you shall have ten husbands of mighty prowess, and renowned for glorious acts; and you shall have a son magnanimous and valiant, distinguished by the rank of a patriarch, from whom the various races of men shall multiply, and by whose posterity the universe shall be filled. You, virtuous lady, shall be of marvellous birth, and delighting the hearts of all. Thus having spoken, the deity disappeared, and Soma informs his hearers that it was this princess who was born as Marisha.

"Soma having concluded, the Prāchetasas took Marisha, as he had enjoined them, righteously to wife, relinquishing their indignation against the trees, and upon her they begot the eminent patriarch Daksha, who was (in a former life) born as the son of Brahma. This great sage, for the furtherance of creation and the increase of mankind, created progeny. Obeying the command of Brahma, he made movable and immovable things, bipeds and quadrupeds, and subsequently by his will gave birth to females, ten of whom he bestowed on Dharma, thirteen on Kasyapa, and twenty-seven, who regulate the course of time, on Soma (the moon). Of these the gods, the Titans, the snake gods, cattle and birds, the singers and dancers of the courts of heaven, the spirits of evil and other beings, were born. From that period forward living creatures were engendered in an ordinary manner. Before the time of Daksha, they were variously propagated by the will, by sight, by touch, and by the influence of religious austerities by devout sages and holy saints."

Daksha's first attempts at populating the world were unsuccessful. A thousand sons were born to him by Asikni, but they were induced by Nārada not to propagate offspring. A thousand other sons by the same wife were born, who also were induced by Nārada not to be troubled with children. The Prachetasas, incensed, cursed Nārada, and proceeded to create sixty daughters by Asikni, whom he gave to various husbands, by whom they had children. At length, when a time of peace and prosperity prevailed on the earth, and the gods had their proper

places assigned to them, to Daksha was given the position as chief of the Prajapatis, the progenitors of mankind.

VASISHTHA.

Vasishtha, together with Pulastya, is said to have narrated the 'Vishnu Purāna,' and he, too, is believed to have been the writer of many of the Vedic hymns. It was he who allayed the anger of Parāsara when that sage was trying to extirpate the Rākshas race, because one of their kings had slain his father. He is said to have been the Vyāsa, or arranger of the Vedas, in the eighth Dvāpara Age; this work of arranging having a different agent in each age.

Vasishtha served as the family priest of several kings. One of these, named Saudāsa, when out hunting, seeing a couple of tigers, shot one of them with an arrow. It happened that these tigers were really Rākshasas, for, as the one shot by Saudāsa was dying, it assumed a fiendish shape; the other, threatening vengeance, disappeared. Not long after this, as the king was engaged in a sacrifice, Vasishtha being out of the room, the Rākshas who escaped, assuming the form of Vasishtha, came to the king and said: "Now that the sacrifice is ended, give me something to eat; let it be cooked, and I will presently return." The Rākshas next transformed himself into the cook, and, having prepared a dish of human flesh, brought it to the king. When the real Muni entered, the king offered him the dish; but he discovered by the force of meditation, that it was human flesh that was presented to him. Indignant at this insult, cursing the king, he said: "Your appetite shall be excited by similar food to that now offered." The king was astonished at this outburst of anger, and Vasishtha, seeing this, by further meditation discovered the whole trick. As he could not recall entirely the effects of his curse, he modified it so that it was to work for twelve years only.† It was

* For further particulars respecting Daksha see the account of Siva, where the story is told of his decapitation, and a goat's head being given to him.

† 'Vishnu Purāna,' p. 381.

same king who was cursed by Vasishtha's [illegible]kti to become a Rākshas, and who, when in that state, devoured the sage who cursed him.

Vasishtha also cursed a king named Nimi. As this king was about to commence a sacrifice that was to continue for a thousand years, he sent to ask Vasishtha to officiate as priest; but as the Muni was engaged in a similar work for Indra, he could not assist Nimi for the next five hundred years. When, however, Vasishtha left the court, the king proceeded with his sacrifice, engaging Gautama as priest. As soon as his engagement was over with Indra, the sage, desiring to conduct Nimi's sacrifice, found another priest had been appointed, and was so angry that he, cursing the king, declared that he should cease to exist in a bodily form. On learning what was done, the king pronounced a similar curse upon the sage. Both curses took effect; but as Vasishtha's spirit became united to the spirits of Mitra and Varuna, when these deities were smitten with the beauty of the nymph Urvasi, the spirit of the sage fell from them, and he became again incorporated through her."* A verse in the Rig-Veda ascribes Vasishtha's birth to Mitra and Varuna, in harmony with the legend just quoted:—"Thou, O Vasishtha, art a son of Mitra and Varuna, born a Brāhman from the nymph Urvasi. All the gods placed in the vessel thee, the drop which had fallen through divine contemplation."

There are stories of great quarrels between this sage and Visvamitra, who was anxious to obtain the position of priest to [illegible], which was held by Vasishtha. At another time, when Vasishtha was priest to Harischandra, he was so greatly incensed at the [illegible]ment the king had received at Visvamitra's hands that he [illegible] him, and he became a crane. His rival returned the compliment, and he too became a bird. In this form the sages fought so violently that it was necessary for Brahmā to come to pacify them. The great cause of unpleasantness was the fact that Visvamitra was a Kshattriya by birth, who, by penance and

* 'Vishnu Purāna,' p. 388.

various rites, obtained admission into the Brahmanical caste. Previous to his [illegible], he was a great king; and being desirous of possessing the wonderful cow that belonged to Vasishtha, which had the power to grant whatever her owner desired, as he could not overcome the Brahmans, owing to their superhuman power, he sought to raise himself to equality with them, and at length his efforts were crowned with success.

10. NĀRADA.

Nārada's name is not found in the list of Brahmā's sons in the 'Vishnu Purāna,' yet he is generally regarded as one, though, according to some authorities, he has a different origin. He is the messenger of the gods, and is often described as imparting information that was only known to [illegible]. It was he who persuaded the sons of Daksha not to beget offspring, and who was accordingly cursed for his interference; and he who informed Kansa of the approaching birth of Krishna, which led that king to slay the children of Vasudeva: hence his common name is Kalikāraka, the strife-maker, and in modern plays he is introduced as a spy and marplot. The name Nārada is employed as a term of abuse, as descriptive of a quarrelsome meddling person.

"A distinguished son of Brahmā, named Nārada, whose actions are the subject of a Purāna, bears a strong resemblance to Hermes or Mercury. He was a wise legislator, gifted with arts and arms, an eloquent messenger of the gods, either to one another or to favoured mortals, and a musician of exquisite skill. His inventing the *vina*, or Indian lute, is thus described in the poem entitled 'Māgha': 'Nārada sat watching from the time his large *vina*, which, by the impulse of the breeze, yielded notes that pierced successively the regions of his ear, and proceeded by musical intervals.' The Law Tract, supposed to have been revealed by Nārada, is at this hour cited by Pundits, and we cannot therefore believe him to have been the patron of thieves, though an innocent theft of Krishna's cattle, by way of

putting his divinity to the test, he shone as computed, in the 'Bhāgavata Purāna,' to his father Brahmā.‡

The accounts of Nārada's origin vary considerably. According to the Bhāgavata, he was the third incarnation of Vishnu. Manu declares that he was one of the Mahārishis whom he created at the beginning of the age. Moor† describes as follows: "Brahmā said: 'Rise up, Rudra, and form men to govern the world.' Rudra obeyed; but the men he made were fiercer than tigers, having nothing but the destructive quality in their composition. Anger was their only passion. Brahmā, Vishnu, and Rudra then joined their different powers, and created ten men, whose names were Nārada," &c. The 'Siva Purāna' teaches that Nārada sprang from the thigh of his father: "Brahmā, in view of peopling the world, produced four beings, who, being refractory, caused their parent to frown. To comfort him, Siva, in the character of Rudra, issued from a fold in his forehead with five heads and ten arms, and, endowing Brahmā with additional might, he (Brahmā) produced Bhrigu and the seven Rishis, and after that Nārada from his thigh." ‡

In another birth Nārada was the son of Kasyapa§ and a daughter of Daksha. Daksha was greatly incensed when he dissuaded the Prajāpati's sons from peopling the world, and declared that they should not have a resting-place; hence his wandering life.

On one occasion Nārada was cursed by his own father, and also cursed Brahmā in return. "Brahmā exhorted his son Nārada to take a wife, and assist in peopling the world. Nārada, who was a votary of Krishna, becomes angry, affirms that devotion to that god is the sole way to attain felicity, and reproaches his father as an erring instructor. Brahmā, in reply, curses Nārada, and dooms him to a life of sensuality, and subjection to women. Nārada pays back the imprecation as follows: 'Wretch! become no object of adoration: how shall any one be devoted to the forms of thy worship? Thou shalt

* Sir W. Jones, 'As. Res.,' i. 264.
† Moor, 'Hindu Pantheon,' p. 78.
‡ 'Hindu Pantheon,' p. 91.
§ 'Vishnu Purāna,' p. 118.

without doubt, loathe her who is no fit object of thy desires!' Through this curse of Nárada, the creator of the world ceased to be an object of worship. Beholding the beauty of his daughter, he ran after her. Nárada, having made obeisance to his lotus-born father, forsook his Brāhmanical body, and became a Gandharva,* a chorister of Indra's heaven."

In the Mahābhārata, Nárada figures as a religious teacher; and in the 'Uttara Kánda' of the Rāmāyana is a specimen of his teaching.† A Brāhman, carrying the dead body of his son, came to the door of Rāma's palace at Ayodha; and bewailing his loss, as he himself was unconscious of any fault, he believed it to be owing to some misconduct on the part of the king. Rāma summoned his councillors, when the divine sage Nárada spoke as follows: "Hear, O king, how the boy's untimely death occurred; and, having heard the truth regarding what ought to be done, do it." The story, briefly told, is as follows: "A presumptuous Sudra, paying no regard to the fact that during the age in which he lived the prerogative of practising self-mortification had not descended to the humble class to which he belonged, had been guilty of seeking to secure a store of religious merit by its exercise. Rāma, after considerable search, comes upon a person who was engaged in the manner described by Nárada. The Sudra avows his name, and his desire to conquer for himself the rank of a god by the self-mortification he was undergoing. Rāma instantly strikes off the offender's head; the gods applaud the deed, and, having been encouraged by them to ask a boon, Rāma requests that the Brāhman's boy may be resuscitated. He is informed that he was restored to life the very moment that the Sudra was slain."

Nárada was the friend and companion of Krishna, and was famed for his musical talents, but, becoming presumptuous on account of them, he emulated the divine strains of Krishna, who severely punished him for his presumption by placing his

* 'Nárada Pancharatna.' Muir, O. S. T., preface, iv. p. 6.
† Ibid. i. 117.

in the paws of a bear, when it emitted [illegible] far sweeter than those of the minstrelsy of the mortin[illegible]asician. Krishna played many practical jokes on his f[illegible] on one occasion he went so far as to metamorphose him [illegible] woman.*

Great honour is given to Nārad[illegible] use he is said to have revealed to Valmiki the 'Rāmāyan[illegible] which opens as follows:—

> "To sainted Nārad, [illegible] those
> Whose lore in wor[illegible]dom flows,
> Whose constant [illegible] chief delights
> Were scripture [illegible] rites,
> The good Valm[illegible] and best
> Of hermit sai[illegible] words addressed:
> 'In all the [illegible] pray thee, who
> Is virtuou[illegible] true?
> Firm in [illegible] of grateful mind,
> To ever[illegible] good and kind?
> Bount[illegible] holy, just and wise,
> Alone [illegible] fair to all men's eyes?
>
> * * *
>
> G[illegible] divine, the boon I ask,
> F[illegible], I ween, an easy task,
> [illegible] the power is given to know
> [illegible] a man breathes here below.
> [illegible] Nārad, clear before whose eye
> [illegible] present, past, and future lie,
> Made ready answer!'" †

Nārad[illegible]ceeds to narrate the life of Rāma to Valmiki, who feels [illegible] the task of writing down what was told him is too great [illegible]k for his powers, until Brahmā himself appears, and [illegible]es him to proceed:

> "Then come, O [illegible] relate
> The life of Rāma, [illegible] great;
> The [illegible] saintly Nārad told
> In [illegible] glorious length unfold!" ‡

* Moor, 'Hindu Pantheon,' [illegible]
† Griffiths's 'Rāmāyana,' i. [illegible] ‡ Ibid. i. 22.

CHAPTER II.

KUVERA.

KUVERA, the god of riches, does not occupy a very conspicuous position in the mythology of the Indians. No images or pictures of him are to be had, though he is frequently referred to in the Rāmāyana as the lord of gold and wealth. "Brahmā had a mental son named Pulastya, who [illegible] a mental son named Gaviputta Vaisravana (Kuvera). The [illegible] deserted his father, and went to Brahmā, who as a reward [illegible] him immortal, and appointed him to be the god of riches, with Lanka for his capital, and the car Pushpaka for his vehicle.* [illegible] was of immense size, that moved at its owner's will at [illegible] speed. Rāvana took it by force from Kuvera, at [illegible] death it was restored by Rāma to its original possessor.

"*Pulastya being incensed at this desertion (of [illegible] Kuvera) reproduced the half of himself in the form of [illegible], who looked upon Vaisravana with indignation. The [illegible] to pacify his father, and with this view gave him [illegible] Rākshasīs to attend on him: Pushpotkatā, who had [illegible] Rāvana and Kumbhakarna; Mālinī, who bore Vibhīsha[illegible] Rākā, who bore Khara and Sūparnakha. These sons [illegible] valiant, skilled in the Vedas and observers of religious [illegible] but perceiving the prosperity of Vaisravana, were filled [illegible] jealousy. Excepting Khara and Sūparnakha, they began [illegible] practise austerities to propitiate Brahmā, and at the end of [illegible] thousand years Rāvana cut off his own head and threw it as an*

* 'Mahābhārata:' Muir, O. S. T., iv. 48[illegible]

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oblation into the fire. Brahmā [illegible] a stop to their austerities, and to offer them boons ([illegible] of immortality). He ordained that Rāvana should have [illegible] and shapes at will and be invincible, except by men; [illegible] Kumbhakarna should enjoy a long sleep. Having obtained these powers, Rāvana expelled Vaisravana from Lanka. Kuvera retired to Gandamārdana. Rāvana having been [illegible] as king, and begun to exercise his power tyranically, the [illegible] his resort to Brahmā, who promises that, as Rāvana could [illegible] be killed by gods or Asuras, the four-armed Vishnu, the [illegible] of warriors, should by his (Brahmā's) appointment des[illegible] to earth for his destruction."*

The Rāmāyana (Uttara [illegible])† makes Kuvera the grandson, not the son, of Pulastya. [illegible] the Krita Yuga the pious Pulastya, being teased with the si[illegible] and dancing of different damsels, proclaimed that any one [illegible] them whom he saw near his hermitage should become a mot[illegible]. This threat had not been heard by the daughter of Tri[illegible]du, who came near the hermitage, and incurred Pulasty[illegible] threatened punishment. Her father, on learning her con[illegible], gave her as wife to Pulastya, and she bore him a son [illegible] Visravas; who, becoming a sage, married a daughter of [illegible] Muni Bharadvāja, whose son Brahmā named Vaisravana ([illegible]era). He performed austerities for thousands of years, [illegible] received as a boon from Brahmā that he should be the god [illegible], and one of the guardians of the world. At the sug[illegible] of his father Visravas, he took possession of Lanka [illegible] his abode, which was formerly built by Visvakarma for [illegible] Kākshasas, who through fear of Vishnu had recently for[illegible].

[illegible] Kākshas prince named Sumali who had been driven to [illegible] happening to visit the earth, saw Kuvera travelling in [illegible] chariot to visit his father. This leads him to devise a plan [illegible] which he might regain his former position. He sends his [illegible]ghter Kaikasi to woo Visravas; she is kindly received and becomes the mother of Rāvana, Kumbhakarna, Sūparnakha and Vibhishana. When Kaikasi saw the splendour of Kuvera, she

* M. [illegible] O. S. T., v. 483. † Ibid. iv. 488.

urges Rāvana to [illegible] him in glory; who, in order to effect this, undergoes [illegible] austerities for a thousand years, when Brahmā grants him as a boon invincibility against all beings more powerful than men and other gifts. Kuvera on Rāvana's demand yields the city of Lanka.

It was noticed above that Kuvera was one of the guardians of the world; these are commonly said to be four in number. Rāma, speaking, mentions their names:

> "May he whose hand the thunder wield [Indra],
> Be in the East thy guard and shield;
> May Yama's care the South befriend,
> And Varuna's arm the West defend;
> And let Kuvera, Lord of Gold,
> The North with firm protection hold." *

When eight guardians are spoken of the additional four are these:—Agni has charge of the South-East, Surya of the South-West, Soma of the North-East, and Vāyu of the North-West.

Kuvera is called the King of the Yākshasas, savage beings who, because the moment they were born said "Let us eat," were called Yākshasas. These beings were ever on the watch for prey, and ate those they slew in battle.

Throughout the Rāmāyana there are brief references to Kuvera as the giver of riches, and also to the beauty of his palace and gardens. Thus Bharadvāja the sage [illegible] of giving Rāma and Lakshman a fitting reception, said:

> "Here let Kuvera's garden rise,
> Which far in Northern Kuru lies;
> For leaves let cloth and gems entwine
> And let its fruit be nymphs divine." †

His garden is a place "where the inhabitants enjoy a [illegible] perfection, attended with complete happiness, obtained with [illegible] exertion. There is there no vicissitude, nor decrepitude, [illegible] death, nor fear; no distinction of virtue and vice, none of the

* Griffiths's 'Rāmayana,' ii. 20. † Ibid. ii. 35[illegible]

inequalities denoted by the words [illegible] and 'intermediate,' nor any change resulting from the succession of the four Yugas. There is neither grief, weariness, anxiety, hunger, nor fear. The people live in [illegible]th, free from every suffering, for ten or twelve thou[illegible]." * As Sugriva was sending forth his armies to search for Sita, he thus speaks of this garden to Satabal, the leader of the army of the North:

"Pursue your onward way, and haste
Through the [illegible] of the waste,
Until triumphant [illegible] light
You reach Kailāsa's glittering height;
There stands a garden decked with gold,
For King Kuvera wrought of old,
A home the heavenly artist planned,
And fashioned with his cunning hand.
There [illegible] storm the flood
With [illegible] flower and opening bud;
Where [illegible] and mallards float, and gay
[illegible] come down to play.
[illegible] Vaisravan's self, the lord
[illegible] universe adored,
[illegible] golden gifts to mortals sends,
[illegible] with the Guhyakas,‡ his friends." §

As Rāma and Lakshman were wandering in the forest, they were [illegible] by a giant named Virādha; but as they could not slay him with their weapons, they buried him alive, and as a result he regained his proper form. Formerly Kuvera had cursed him, after "loving Rambha's charms too well," to assume the hideous form in which Rāma met with him, and the only [illegible] Kuvera would give him was:

"When Rama, Dasaratha's son,
Destroys thee, and the fight is won,
Thy proper shape once more assume,
And heaven again shall give thee room." ‖

When Rāvana had risen to the summit of his power, he made the gods perform various offices in his house: thus Indra pre-

* 'Bhagavata Purana,' Muir, O. S. T., i. 492. † Nymphs of Paradise.
‡ Guardians of treasures. § Griffith's 'Ramayana,' iv. 24.
‖ Id., iii. 14.

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pared gru[illegible] was his cook, Surya gave light by day and Chandra [illegible] and Kuvera became his cash-keeper.

Kuvera marr[illegible] or Charvi; and two of his sons, through a curse of [illegible] Nārada, became trees, in which condition they remained [illegible] Krishna when an infant uprooted them. Nārada met [illegible] in a forest, bathing with their wives, in a state of intoxication. The wives, ashamed of themselves, fell at Nārada's feet and sought for pardon; but as their husbands disregarded the presence of the sage, they suffered the full effects of his curse.

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CHAPTER III

THE DEMIGODS OF THE RĀMĀYAṆA.

SUGRĪVA.

OVER the mighty leaders of the Monkey army associated with Rāma in the destruction of Rāvaṇa was King Sugrīva. When Vishṇu, before leaving heaven to become incarnate as Rāma, asked the gods to

> "Make helps, in war to lend him aid,
> In forms that change at will arrayed,
> Of wizard skill and hero might,
> Outstrippers of the wind in flight,"

they consented, and "begot in countless swarms brave sons disguised in sylvan forms." Of Sugrīva it is said,

> "That noblest hero The Sun, was great Sugrīva's sire." †

SUGRĪVA.

When Rāma finds this King of the Monkeys, he was an exile, having been driven from his throne by his brother Bāli.

* Griffith's 'Rāmāyaṇa,' i. 92. † Ibid. i. 93.

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Kabandha, a giant slain by Rāma, gives the following description of the king to the wandering hero:—

"O Rāma, hear my words and seek
Sugriva, for of him I speak.
His brother Bāli, Indra's son,
Expelled him, when the fight he won
With four great chieftains, faithful still,
He dwells on Rishyamuka's hill.
* * * *
Lord of the Vānars, just and true,
Strong, very glorious, bright to view,
Unmatched in counsel, firm and meek,
Bound by each word his lips may speak,
Good, splendid, mighty, bold and brave,
Wise in each plan to guide and save.
His brother, fired by lust of sway,
Drove forth the king in woods to stray;
In all thy search for Sītā, he
Thy ready friend and help will be."*

Rāma discovers his retreat, hears the story of his wrongs, promises to slay Bāli the usurper, and assist Sugriva to regain his throne; Sugriva on his part solemnly promises to aid Rāma in his search and to enable him to release Sita from Rāvana's bonds. Rāma very soon fulfils his part of the compact. He marches with Sugriva and the others to Bāli's city; Sugriva challenges Bāli to fight, and just as he is getting the worst of it, Rāma lets fly his arrow, which gives Bāli his mortal wound. Ere this chief dies, he strongly reproves Rāma for slaying one who had never harmed him, and for slaying him too in a secret and cowardly manner. He asks:

"What fame, from one thou hast not slain
In front of battle, canst thou gain,
Whose secret hand has laid me low,
When madly fighting with my foe?
* * * *
I held that thou wouldst surely scorn
To strike me as I fought my foe,

* Griffith's 'Rāmāyana,' iii. 337.

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[illegible] blow,
[illegible] heart is shown,
[illegible] with grass overgrown,
[illegible] virtue's badge, but guile
And [illegible] thy soul defile."†

Rāma reminds Bāli [illegible] had ordained his death, against which it was useless to contend, with which statement Bāli agrees, and, withdrawing [illegible] unkind words, asks for Rāma's forgiveness.

On the death of Bāli, Sugriva is again installed as King of the Vānars, and Rāma gives [illegible] months for the enjoyment of his long lost wife and kingdom. At its expiration, as Sugriva appeared to be so absorbed with pleasure as to forget his engagement to assist Rāma, Lakshman reminds him of his duty in no measured terms. At length the [illegible] given to collect the forces, when an army of countless [illegible] of monkeys, bears, &c., go forth in search of Sita, who [illegible] covered, is somewhere in the southern district over which [illegible] is supposed to rule, who after diligent inquiry learns [illegible] ereabouts. The [illegible] marches to the sea-shore; a br[illegible] acting the island [illegible] (Ceylon) with the mainland [illegible] by Nala, and [illegible] army surrounds the city. No soo[illegible] were they in [illegible] city of the foe than

"Up sprang Sugriva from the ground,
And reached the turret at a bound.
Unterrified the Vanar stood,
And wroth, with [illegible] hardihood,
The king in bitter words addressed,
[illegible] thus his scorn and hate expressed:
King of the giant race, in me
[illegible] friend and slave of Rāma see.
[illegible] of the world, he gives me power
[illegible] smite thee in thy fenced tower.'
[illegible] through the air his challenge rang,
[illegible] Rāvan's face the Vānar sprang,
[illegible] from his head the kingly crown,
[illegible] ashed it in his fury down.

[illegible] Emit. † Griffiths's 'Rāmāyana,' iv. 91.

Straight at his foe the giant [illegible]
His mighty arms around him [illegible]
With strength resistless [illegible]
And dashed him panting [illegible]
Unharmed amid the storm [illegible]
Swift to his feet Sugriva [illegible]
Again in furious fight [illegible]
With streams of blood [illegible] were wet,
Each grasping his [illegible] waist."*

They continue to fight with [illegible] result until Rāvana calls to his aid his magical arts:

"But brave Angada [illegible] to know
The guileful [illegible] his foe,
Gained [illegible] the upper air,
And breathed [illegible] strength, and spirit there;
Then [illegible] victory won,
Return[illegible] Rāma's royal son." †

In the course of the great fight, a giant named Kumbhakarna, a brother of Rāvana, came forth from the city and did great execution amongst the Vānar host, devouring his victims [illegible] as they were slain, though numbered by the [illegible] size of this monster may be ga[illegible]

"There was no respite then, no pause;
His jaws gaped and closed his hell-like jaws:
Yet prisoned in that gloomy cave,
Some Vānars still their lives could save;
Some through his nostrils found a way,
Some through his ears resought the day."

Prince Angad tried to rally the Vānar host, [illegible] ned senseless on the ground." Hanumān [illegible] erely wounded by the monster. And now [illegible] he hurled a hill at him, but

"The giant's chest the stroke repelled."

This compliment the monster returns by

* Griffith's 'Rāmayana,' vi. 121.
† Ibid. v. 197.

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The god of wind beside her came,
And breathed upon the lovely dame;
And as he fanned her robe aside,
The wondrous beauty that he eyed,
In rounded lines of breast and limb,
And neck and shoulders, ravished him;
And captured by her peerless charms,
He strained her in his amorous arms.

HANUMÁN.

Then to the eager god she cried,
In trembling accents, terrified:
'Whose impious love has wronged a spouse
So constant to her nuptial vows?'
He heard, and thus his answer made:
'Oh, be not troubled, nor afraid.
But trust, and thou shalt know ere long
My love has done thee, sweet, no wrong.
So strong, and brave, and wise shall be
The glorious son I give to thee;

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Might shall be his, that nought can tire,
And limbs to spring as springs his sire."
Thus spoke the god: the conquered dame
Rejoiced in heart nor feared the shame." *

At length the son was born. When a child, seeing the sun rising, and thinking it to be the fruit of a tree, he sprang up three hundred leagues to clutch it. On another occasion Indra let a bolt fly at him which caused him to fall violently on a rock. The fall shattered his cheek, and hence the name Hanumān, the long-jawed one, was given to him. His father seeing this became angry, and the breezes ceased to blow, until the gods in terror came to appease Vāyu: Brahmā promised that this boy should not be slain in battle, and Indra declared that his bolts should never injure him more.

This Monkey leader rendered most valuable service to Rāma. It was he who discovered Sīta's abode, and carried a message to her from Rāma. It was he who set fire to Lanka and caused fear to enter the hearts of the Rākshasas dwelling there. It was he who bore Rāma on his shoulders as he crossed over from India to Lanka. Hanumān thus speaks of his wondrous power:

"Sprung from that glorious Father, I
In power and speed with him may vie.
A thousand times, with airy leap,
Can circle loftiest Meru's steep:
With my fierce arms can stir the sea
Till from their beds the waters flee,
And rush at my command to drown
This land with grove and tower and town.
I through the fields of air can spring
Far swifter than the feathered king,
And leap before him as he flies
On sounding pinions through the skies.
I can pursue the Lord of Light
Uprising from the eastern height,
And reach him ere his course be sped,
With burning beams engarlanded." †

* Griffiths's 'Rāmāyana,' iv. 272. † Ibid. iv. 275.

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All these powers he devoted to the service of Rāma; for, when that hero and his brother were wounded in the fight and nothing else could restore them, Hanumān fled to the Himālayas from Ceylon and returned almost immediately with the medicinal herbs that grew there, though, on reaching the hills, he had some difficulty * in finding them:

"But when he thought to seize the prize,
They hid them from his eager eyes.
Then to the hill in wrath he spake;
'Mine arm this day shall vengeance take
If thou wilt feel no pity, none,
In this great need of Raghu's son.'
He ceased: his mighty arms he bent,
And from the trembling mountain rent
His huge head, with the life it bore,
Snakes, elephants, and golden ore.
O'er hill and plain and watery waste
His rapid way again he traced,
And mid the wondering Vānars laid
His burden, through the air conveyed.
The wondrous herbs' delightful scent
To all the host new vigour lent.
Free from all darts, and wounds, and pain,
The sons of Raghu lived again;
And dead and dying Vānars, healed,
Rose vigorous from the battle-field."†

Hanumān is described in the 'Uttara Kānda' of the Rāmāyana,‡ as a being possessed of great learning. "The chief of the

* In seeking for these leaves, Hanumān was exposed to considerable danger. Kālanemi, an uncle of Rāvana, was promised the half of the kingdom, if he would slay Hanumān. To effect this, he went to the Himālayas and, disguised as a devotee, invited Hanumān to eat with him. Hanumān refused; but on entering a tank near, a crocodile seized his foot. This rapidly Hanumān dragged out of the tank and killed it, from whose body a lovely Apsaras arose, whom Daksha had cursed to live in that form, until her release was accomplished by Hanumān. This nymph, in gratitude for his kindness, warned Hanumān of his danger. The monkey god went to Kālanemi, and telling him that he saw through his disguise, took him by the feet, and whirled him through the air to Lanka, where he fell before the throne in Rāvana's palace.

† Griffith's 'Rāmāyana,' iv. 225. ‡ Muir, O. S. T., v. 390.

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monkeys, measureless, seeking to acquire grammar, looking up to the sun, bent on inquiry, start from the mountain where the sun rises to that where he sets, apprehending the mighty collection. The chief of the monkeys is perfect; no one equals him in the Shāstras, in learning, and in ascertaining the sense of the Scriptures. In all sciences, in the rules of austerity, he rivals the preceptor of the gods."

Rāma himself thus speaks of Hanumān's knowledge of the Scriptures, when he came to the exile as Sugriva's envoy:

"One whose words so sweetly flow,
The whole Rig Veda needs must know;
And in his well-trained memory store
The Yajush and the Sāman's lore.
He must have bent his faithful ear
All grammar's varied rules to hear.
For his long speech how well he spoke!
In all its length no rule he broke."*

To this day Hanumān is regarded as divine, and in some parts of India is largely worshipped. Living monkeys are regarded as his representatives: hence many temples swarm with them, and it is regarded as a meritorious act to feed them, and a sacrilegious act to injure them.

3. NALA†

Nala, another of the monkey chiefs, was a son of Visvakarma; and as the son of the architect of the gods, the builder of their beautiful cities, and the forger of their wonder-working weapons, as might have been expected, his work was of a similar nature to that for which his illustrious parent was celebrated. When the army reached the sea, and the difficulty of crossing to

* Griffith's 'Rāmāyana,' iv. 25.

† This Nala must not be confounded with another person of the same name, whose history is given in the Mahābhārata. Nala of the Mahābhārata was king of Nishadha, the husband of Damayanti, whom he obtained in marriage, although Indra, Agni, Varuna, and Yama were amongst the suitors for her hand.

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Lanka presented itself as Rāma was preparing to shoot one of his mighty arrows to dry up the ocean, the Sea Deity presented himself amidst a great commotion of the elements, and thus addressed him:

"Air, ether, fire, earth, water, true
To Nature's will, their course pursue;
And I, as ancient laws ordain,
Unfordable must still remain.
Yet, Raghu's son, my counsel hear:
Ne'er for love, or hope, or fear,
Will pile my waters of a heap,
And leave a pathway through the deep.
Still shall my care for thee provide
An easy passage o'er the tide,
And like a city's paven street
Shall be the road beneath thy feet."*

His first word of advice was this, that Rāma, instead of shooting at the sea, should direct his arrow towards the North, to destroy a race of demons who were hateful to him, and then he went on to say:

"Now let a wondrous task be done
By Nala, Visvakarma's son,
Who, born of one of Vānar race,
Inherits by his father's grace
A share of his celestial art.
Call Nala to perform his part,
And he, divinely taught and skilled,
A bridge athwart the sea shall build."†

Nala declares that he has the will and power to accomplish this great and necessary work; and, as an encouragement to Rāma to believe that he will complete it, said:

"My mother, ere she bore her son,
This boon from Visvakarma won:
'O Mandari, this child shall be
In skill and glory next to me.'

* Griffith's 'Rāmāyana,' v. 66. † Ibid. v. 67.

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But why unbidden should I tell
Thine ear with praises of my skill?
Command the Vānar hosts to lay
Foundations for the bridge to-day."*

Rāma trusts Nala's skill, and orders the Vānars to bring materials for the bridge:

"Up sprang the Vānars from their rest,
The mandate of the king obeyed,
And sought the forest's mighty shade,
Uprooted trees to earth they threw,
And to the sea the timber drew.
* * * *
With mighty engines piles of stone
And seated hills were overthrown:
Imprisoned waters sprang on high,
In rain descending from the sky:
And ocean with a roar and swell
Heaved wildly when the mountains fell.
Then the great bridge of wondrous strength
Was built, a hundred leagues in length.
Rocks, huge as autumn clouds, bound fast
With cordage from the shore, were cast,
And fragments of each riven hill,
And trees whose flowers adorned them still.
Wild was the tumult, loud the din,
As ponderous rocks went thundering in.
Each set of sun, so toiled each crew,
Ten leagues and four the structure grew;
The labours of the second day
Gave twenty more of ready way,
And on the fifth, when sank the sun,
The whole stupendous work was done.
O'er the broad way the Vānars sped,
Nor swayed it with their countless tread."†

* Griffith's 'Rāmāyana,' v. 68. † Ibid

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4. NILA.

This chief is said to have sprung from Agni, and is described as

> "Bright as flame,
> Who in his splendour, might, and worth,
> Surpassed the sire who gave him birth."*

Though thus eulogized, no very special feats of his are recorded in the Rāmāyana. He held a post of honour as the leader of a division of the army, and his special work appears to have been to provide sentries, and generally to guard the forces of Sugriva from the sudden attacks of the enemy. As the son of Agni he was able to see clearly, and by his watchfulness rendered good service.

5. SUSHENA.

Varuna aided Rāma by the gift of this leader, who was the father of Tārā, the wife of Bāli, Sugriva's brother and the usurper of his throne. To him was given the command of the army of the West. Sugriva, addressing him, said:

> "Two hundred thousand of our best
> With thee, my lord, shall seek the West."†

After searching in vain for traces of the missing princess, he and the other unsuccessful leaders returned to Rāma and Sugriva, and said:

> "On every hill our steps have been,
> By wood, and cave, and deep ravine;
> And all the wandering brooks we know,
> Throughout the land that seaward flow,

* Griffith's 'Rāmāyana,' v. 94. † Ibid. iv. 208.

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"Our feet by thy command have trod
The tangled thicket and the waste,
And dens and dingles hard to pass
For creeping plants and matted grass."

Though they could not learn the exact spot where Sītā was hidden, they discovered that she had been carried towards the South, the quarter under Hanumān's special charge, and thus considerably narrowed the sphere of the quest. In the great encounter with the foe, Sushena did good service; for when Rāma and Lakshman were overcome by Indrajit's magical noose, Sugrīva and his comrades were greatly distressed. The Vānar king, however, being aware that Garuda could release them from the spell by which they were bound, told Sushena, when they regained their strength and senses, to fly with them to Kishkindha hermitage, where they could dwell in safety, whilst he himself fought against Rāvana, and rescued the royal lady. Then Sushena, as the physician, said:

"Hear me yet:
When gods and fiends in battle met,
So fiercely fought the demon crew,
So wild a storm of arrows flew,
That heavenly warriors, faint with pain,
Sank smitten by the ceaseless rain,
Vrihaspati, with herb and spell,
Cured the sore wounds of those who fell,
And, skilled in arts that heal and save,
New life and sense and vigour gave.
Far, on the milky ocean's shore,
Still grow those herbs in boundless store;
Let swiftest Vānars thither speed
And bring them for our utmost need.
Let Panas and Sampati bring,
For well the wondrous leaves they know
That heal each wound and life bestow,
Beside that sea, which, churned of yore,
The Amrit on its surface bore,

[1] Griffiths's 'Rāmāyana,' iv. 224.

Where the white billows lash the land,
Chandra's fair height and Drona stand,
Planted by gods, each glittering steep
Looks down upon the milky deep.
Let fleet Hanumān bring us thence,
Those herbs of wondrous influence." *

These plants were brought by Hanumān; the wounded recovered and fought with renewed vigour.

* Griffiths's 'Rāmāyana,' v. 152.

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CHAPTER IV.

THE DEMIGODS OF THE MAHĀBHĀRATA.

As these heroes are so intimately connected with each other, a separate account of each would necessitate frequent repetition; they will therefore be noticed together, in a brief outline of the main story of the Mahābhārata.*

In the fifth generation from Soma (the Moon), the progenitor of the Lunar race, who reigned at Hastināpur, came two sons, Puru† and Yadu; from whom proceeded two branches of the Lunar line. In the account of Krishna and Balarāma, who were born in the Yadu tribe, we have seen the end of that branch of the family. Sixteenth from Puru, the founder of the other branch, came Bharata, from whom India takes its name, Bharatvarsha (the country of Bharata), in the present day. Twenty-third from Bharata came Sāntanu. This Sāntanu had two sons, Bhishma, by the goddess Gangā (the Ganges), and Vichitravirya, by Satyavati.‡ Satyavati had a son named

* This account of the Mahābhārata is taken in an abbreviated form almost entirely from Lecture XIII. of Monier Williams's 'Indian Wisdom.'

† An interesting story is told of Puru. His father, Yayāti, married Devayāni, daughter of Sukra, the preceptor of the Daityas. Her husband loving her servant Sarmisthā also, Puru was born as their youngest son. The wife being highly indignant at the unfaithfulness of her husband, returning to her father's home, so excited the old priest that he cursed Yayāti with old age; but afterwards consented to withdraw this curse provided one of his sons would bear it for him. They all refused to do this excepting Puru. As a reward for his piety, his father disinherited his other sons, and made Puru heir to his dominions.

‡ Satyavati was the daughter of an Apsaras named Adrikā, who was condemned to live on earth in the form of a fish. Parasāra, a sage, met her daughter as he was crossing the river Yamunā, and Vyāsa was the result.

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Vyāsa before her marriage with Santanu; so that Bhishma, Vichitravīrya, and Vyāsa were half-brothers. Bhishma became a Brahmāchari (*i.e.*, took a vow of celibacy). Vyāsa retired to the wilderness to live a life of contemplation, but promised his mother that he would obey her in everything.

Now it so happened that Vichitravīrya died childless, and Satyavati was therefore obliged to ask her son Vyāsa to marry the childless widows. The result was that the one wife, Ambikā, had a son who was born blind, named Dhritarāshtra. This blindness is said to have been caused by the fact that Vyāsa, coming in from his ascetic life, was so repulsive in appearance that Ambikā kept her eyes closed all the time he remained with her. The other wife, named Ambālikā, had a son who was born of a pale complexion, and named Pāndu; this paleness was the result of the *fear that* Vyāsa caused to the mother. Satyavati, not satisfied with either of these children, wished for another and perfect child. But Ambikā, dressing up one of her slaves, sent her to Vyāsa in her stead; the result was that this girl had a son who was called Vidura. After fulfilling his mother's commands, Vyāsa returned to his ascetic life in the forest.

Bhishma, the uncle of these children, conducted the government of Hastināpur in their name during their minority, and their education was also entrusted to him. Dhritarāshtra, though blind, is described as excelling the others in strength; Pāndu, as being skilled in the use of the bow; and Vidura, as pre-eminent in virtue and wisdom.

When the boys came of age, Dhritarāshtra was disqualified for the throne by reason of his blindness; Vidura could not be king because his mother was a Sudra; Pāndu was therefore installed as king. Dhritarāshtra married Gāndhāri (also called Saubaleyi, or Saubali), daughter of Subala, King of Gandhāra. Pāndu married Prithā (or Kunti), the adopted daughter of

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He was born on an island of the river, and hence he had the name Dwaipayana (who moves on an island). Vyāsa is said to have been the arranger of the Vedas, the compiler of the Mahābhārata and the Purānas, and the founder of the Vedānta system of philosophy.

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Kuntibhoja. This Pṛithā, one day, before her marriage, paid such respect and attention to a powerful sage named Durvāsas, a guest in her father's house, that he gave her a charm, and taught her an incantation, by virtue of which she might have a child by any god she liked to call into her presence. Out of curiosity, she invoked the Sun, by whom she had a son who was born clothed in armour. But Pṛithā, fearing the censure of her relatives, deserted her offspring, after exposing it in the river. It was found by Adhirata, a charioteer, and nurtured by his wife Rādhā; whence the child was afterwards called Rādheya, though named by his foster-parents Vasushena. When he was grown up, the god Indra conferred upon him enormous strength, and changed his name to Karna." He is also called Vaikartana, being the son of Vikartana (the Sun).

Pāndu, at his uncle Bhishma's request, next married Mādri, sister of Salya, King of Madra. Soon after this marriage, Pāndu undertook a great campaign, and extended his kingdom to the dimensions it had reached in the time of his great ancestor Bharata. He then, with his two wives, retired to the woods, that he might indulge in his passion for hunting. The blind Dhritarāshtra, with Bhishma as regent, ruled in his stead.

Dhritarāshtra had a hundred sons. The story of their birth is as follows:—"One day, the sage Vyāsa was hospitably entertained by Queen Gāndhāri, and in return granted her a boon. She chose to be the mother of a hundred sons. After two years she produced a mass of flesh, which was divided by Vyāsa into a hundred and one pieces, as big as the joint of a thumb. From these, in due time, the eldest, Duryodhana, was born. The miraculous birth of the remaining ninety-nine occurred in due course. There was also one daughter, named Duhsala." These sons of Dhritarāshtra are generally called "The Kurus," or Kauravas.

Pāndu's children were of divine origin. This circumstance happened in the following manner:—Pāndu, as noticed above, was addicted to hunting. One day, he "transfixed with five arrows a male and female deer. These turned out to be a certain sage and his wife, who had assumed the form of these

animals. The sage cursed Pandu, and predicted that he would die in the embraces of one of his wives. In consequence of this curse, Pandu took the vow of a Brahmachari, gave all his property to the Brahmans, and became a hermit."

Upon this, Pritha, his wife, with his approval, employed the charm and incantation given to her by Durvasas, and had three children: by the god Dharma, Yudhishthira; by Vayu, Bhima; and by Indra, Arjuna. Madri, the other wife of Pandu, was now anxious to have children, and, acting on the advice of Pritha, she thought of the Asvins, who appeared to her according to her wish, through whom she became the mother of twin sons, Nakula and Sahadeva. Soon after this, Pandu, forgetting the curse of the sage, died in the embraces of his wife Madri, who was burned with the dead body of her husband.

Pritha and the five children, generally known as the Pandus, or Pandavas, now returned to Hastinapur, and informed Dhritarashtra of the death of his brother; he seemed to be deeply moved by the event, and the Pandus were allowed to live with his own sons, the Kurus.

But even when the cousins were children, enmity arose, and on one occasion the jealousy of Duryodhana was excited to such a pitch that he tried to poison Bhima, and, when under its effect, threw him into the water. "Bhima, however, was not drowned, but descended to the abode of the Nagas (or serpent demons), who freed him from the poison, and gave him a liquid to drink which endued him with the strength of ten thousand Nagas. From that moment he became a second Hercules." Several schemes were formed for the destruction of the Pandus, but without success.

"The characters of the five Pandavas are drawn with much artistic delicacy of touch, and maintained with general consistency throughout the poem. The eldest, Yudhishthira (the son of Dharma, virtue), is the Hindu ideal of excellence—a pattern of justice; calm, passionless composure; chivalrous honour and cold heroism." As the name implies (firm in battle), "he was probably of commanding stature and imposing presence. He

is described as having a majestic lion-like gait, with a Wellington-like profile and long lotus-eyes.

"Bhima (the son of Vāyu) is a type of brute courage and strength; he is of gigantic stature, impetuous, irascible, somewhat vindictive, and cruel even to the verge of ferocity, making him, as his name implies, 'terrible.' It would appear that his great strength had to be maintained by plentiful supplies of food, as his name, Vṛikodara, 'wolf-stomached,' indicates a voracious appetite; and we are told that at the daily meals of the five brothers half of the whole dish had to be given to Bhima. But he has the capacity for warm, unselfish love, and is ardent in his affection for his mother and brothers.

"Arjuna (the son of Indra) rises more to the European standard of perfection. He may be regarded as the real hero of the Mahābhārata, of undaunted bravery, generous, with refined and delicate sensibilities, tender-hearted, forgiving, and affectionate as a woman, yet of superhuman strength, and matchless in arms and athletic exercises. Nakula and Sahadeva (sons of the Aśvins) are both amiable, noble-hearted, and spirited. All five are as unlike as possible to the hundred sons of Dhritarāshtra, who are represented as mean, spiteful, dishonourable, and vicious." Karna (the son of the Sun), though half-brother of these five Pāndus, in the great conflict is a valuable ally of the Kurus; though in character he is entirely their opposite. "He exhibited in a high degree fortitude, chivalrous honour, self-sacrifice, and devotion. Especially remarkable for a liberal and generous disposition, he never stooped to ignoble practices, like his friends, the Kurus, who were emphatically bad men."

The cousins were educated together at Hastināpur by a Brāhman named Drona; all were instructed in arms, but Arjuna, "by the help of Drona, who gave him magical weapons, excelled all." Both Bhima and the Kuru Duryodhana learnt the use of the club from their cousin Balarāma; Pṛithā, Bhima's mother, was a sister of Vasudeva, and therefore aunt of Krishna. When their education was completed, a tournament was held, in which the youths displayed their skill in archery; in the management of chariots, horses, and elephants; in sword, spear, and club

exercises, and in wrestling. "Arjuna, after exhibiting prodigies of strength, shot five arrows simultaneously into the jaws of a revolving iron boar, and twenty-one arrows into the hollow of a cow's horn, suspended by a string." When he had accomplished this feat, Karna came and did precisely the same deeds of skill, and challenged Arjuna to single combat; but as he could not tell his parentage, he was not considered worthy to enter the lists with the royal youth.

After this tournament was over, Yudhishthira was installed as heir apparent, and soon made his name even more famous than his father's had been. The people wished Yudhishthira to be crowned king at once, but the Kurus tried hard to prevent it. First of all, the Pāndus and their mother were sent to a house at Vāranāvata, in which a quantity of combustible materials was placed, with the intention of burning the whole family. The Pāndus were informed of this by Vidura and escaped; the man who conducted them, and a woman with her five sons, whom Bhīma had led there in a state of intoxication, being consumed instead. By this device, the Kurus were under the impression that their plan had been successful. The brothers, with their mother, now hastened to the woods, where Bhīma slew a giant named Hidimba, and then married his sister.

By the advice of Vyāsa they now went to live in the city of Ekachakrā, disguised as mendicant Brāhmans. Near this city was a Rākshas named Vaka, who compelled the citizens to send him a dish of food daily, and the messenger who took it was devoured as the daintiest morsel of the whole. One day it happened that the turn came to a Brāhman to supply the Rākshas with a meal. The man determined to go himself, but his wife and daughter each asked to be allowed to go with him. Lastly, the little son, too young to speak distinctly, in prattling accents said, "Weep not, father; sigh not, mother." Then, breaking off and brandishing a pointed spike of grass, he exclaimed, "With this spike will I slay the fierce, man-eating giant." Bhīma, overhearing this, offered to go; he went and killed the giant.

After this occurrence, Vyāsa appeared to his grandsons, and

ARJUNA SHOOTING AT THE FISH.

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informed them that Draupadi, the daughter of Drupada, King of Panchāla, was destined to be their common wife. This girl, in a former birth, was the daughter of a sage, and had performed a most severe penance in order that she might have a husband. Shiva was pleased with her devotion, and said: "You shall have five husbands; for five times you said, 'Give me a husband.'" When the brothers returned from Draupadi's Svayambara (a tournament, in which the princess chose for herself a husband), Arjuna having been selected from amongst many suitors on account of his skill in archery, their mother, hearing their footsteps, and fancying they were bringing alms, said, "Divide it amongst yourselves." The word of a mother could not be set aside, so Vyāsa showed them that it was appointed that Draupadi should be the wife of each. At this tournament Arjuna displayed his great skill in the use of the bow, by piercing a fish that was suspended in the air, without looking directly at the object; he saw its image only reflected in a pan of water on the ground.

Vyāsa, seeing the discrepancy between this conduct of the five brothers having a wife in common and that which prevailed in his day, explains it by the fact that Arjuna was really a portion of the essence of Indra, and all his brothers portions of the same god, whilst Draupadi herself was a form of Lakshmi; and therefore, as the five brethren were parts of Indra, there was no impropriety in their having but one wife. It is a fact to be noticed, that to this day polyandry prevails amongst some of the hill-tribes of India. Draupadi is said to have had a son by each of the brothers, and the brothers had other wives besides Draupadi. It was noticed above that Bhīma married Hidimbā. Arjuna married Krishna's sister, Subhadrā, and also a serpent-nymph named Uludi, and Chitrāngadā, daughter of the King of Manipura.

When the Pāndus, by their marriage with Draupadi, had allied themselves with the King of Panchāla, they threw off their disguise, and their uncle Dhritarāshtra divided the kingdom: to his sons he gave Hastināpur; to the Pāndus a district near the Yamuna (Jumna), called Khāndavaprastha. Here they built

Indraprastha (Delhi), and, under Yudhishthira, their kingdom grew.

Arjuna wandered in the forest alone for twelve years, in fulfilment of a vow, and there met with Krishna, who invited him to Dwāraka, where he married Subhadrā. Krishna was invited to a great festival in honour of the inauguration of Yudhishthira as sovereign. Acting on Nārada's advice, Bhishma proposed that an oblation should be made to the best and strongest person present, whom he declared Krishna to be. Sisupāla objected, and, as he reviled Krishna openly, Krishna struck off his head with his discus.

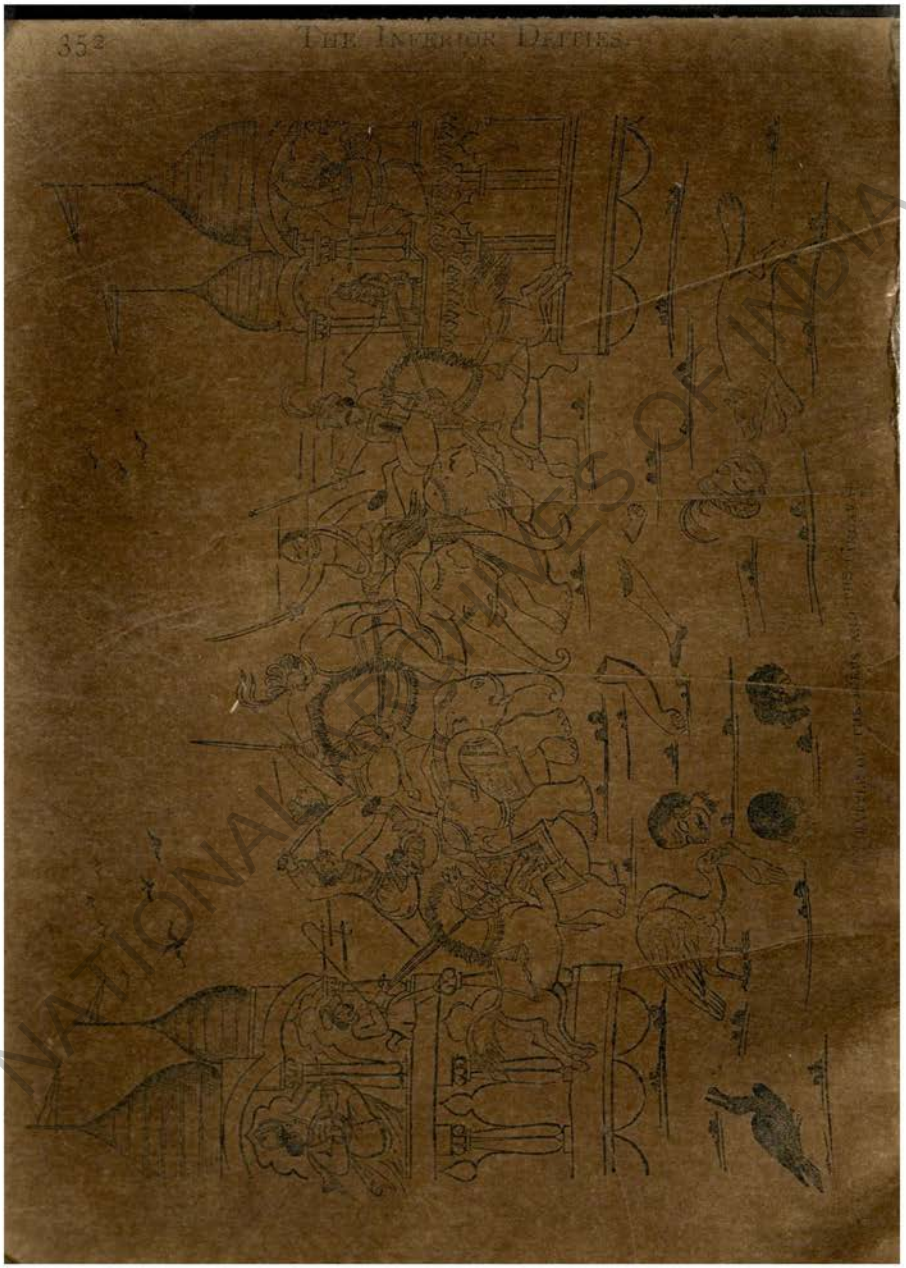
After this, a festival was held at Hastināpur, to which the Pāndus were invited. Yudhishthira was induced to play; and having staked his kingdom, his possessions, and, last of all, Draupadi, lost everything. A compromise was effected. Duryodhana was made ruler over the whole kingdom for twelve years; whilst the Pāndus with Draupadi were to live in the forest for the same period, and to pass the thirteenth year under assumed names, in various disguises. Whilst enjoying this forest life, Arjuna went to the Himālayas to perform severe penance in order to obtain celestial arms. "After some time, Siva, to reward him and prove his bravery, approached as a Kirātā,* or wild mountaineer, at the moment that a demon named Mūka, in the form of a boar, attacked him. Siva and Arjuna shot together at the boar, which fell dead, and both claimed to have hit him first. This served as a pretext for Siva to have a battle with him. Arjuna fought long with the Kirāta, but could not conquer him. At last he recognised the god, and threw himself at his feet, when Siva, pleased with his bravery, gave him the celebrated weapon Pāsupata, to enable him to conquer Karna and the Kuru princes in war."

In the thirteenth year of exile the Pāndus journeyed to the court of King Virāta, and entered his service in disguise.

* The Kirātas were mountaineers, or foresters. In the Rāmāyana they are described as "islanders, who eat raw flesh, live in the waters, and are men-tigers."

Yudhishthira called himself a Brāhmaṇ, and took the name of Kanka. Arjuna called himself Vṛihanalā, and, pretending to be a eunuch, adopted a sort of woman's dress, and taught music and dancing. One day when Virāta and four of the Pāndus were absent, Duryodhana and his brother attacked Virāta's capital, and carried off some cattle. Uttara, the king's son, followed them, having Arjuna as his charioteer. When they came in sight of the enemy, Uttara's heart failed him. Arjuna changed places with him, having told him who he was. This gave him courage, the Kuru army was defeated, and the stolen cattle reclaimed. Arjuna asked Uttara to keep the secret of his real character for the present. A short time afterwards, at a great assembly called by Virāta, the Pāndus took their places amongst the princes, and were welcomed heartily by the king.

A council of princes was soon held, at which Krishna and Balarāma were present, to consider how the Pāndus could regain their possessions. Some were for immediate war; Krishna and Balarāma urged that attempts at negotiation should first be made. This advice was acted upon, but without result. In the meantime, Krishna and his brother returned to Dwārakā. Not long after his arrival at his capital, Duryodhana, the Kuru prince, visited Krishna to ask his aid in the coming struggle; and on the same day, Arjuna, the Pāndu prince, arrived there for the same purpose. And "it happened that they both reached the door of Krishna's apartment, where he was asleep, at the same moment. Duryodhana succeeded in entering first, and took up his station at Krishna's head; Arjuna followed, and stood reverently at his feet." Krishna, on awaking, first saw Arjuna; and when the cousins mentioned the object of their visit, he gave the right of choice to Arjuna. He offered himself to one side, but said he should not himself fight; and to the other side his army of a hundred million warriors. Arjuna at once chose Krishna, and Duryodhana was delighted with the prospect of having Krishna's immense army on his side. Duryodhana then asked Balarāma's aid, but was informed that both the brothers had decided to take no active part in the conflict. Krishna, however, consented to act as Arjuna's charioteer, and joined the Pāndus at Virāta's capital.



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Fresh negotiations were commenced and Krishna himself went as mediator to the Kurus; but although in the assembly he assumed his divine form, and "Brahma appeared in his forehead, Rudra on his breast, the guardians of the world issued from his arms, and Agni from his mouth,"—although the other gods were visible in and about his person, his attempt at reconciliation failed. War was determined on between the cousins. Bhishma was made the commander-in-chief of the Kuru army; and Dhrishtadyumna, son of Drupada, was leader of the Pāndus. Vyāsa offered to give sight to Dhritarāshtra, to enable him to witness the conflict, but, as the blind man declined the offer, Vyāsa gave to his charioteer, Sanjaya, the faculty of knowing everything that took place, made him invulnerable, and bestowed on him the power to transport himself by a thought to any part of the field of battle.

The armies met on Kurukshetra, a plain to the north-west of the modern Delhi, and we are told that "monstrous elephants career over the field, trampling on men and horses, and dealing destruction with their huge tusks; enormous clubs and iron maces clash together with the noise of thunder; rattling chariots dash against each other; thousands of arrows hurtle in the air, darkening the sky; trumpets, kettledrums, and horns add to the uproar; confusion, carnage, and death are everywhere."

The Pāndus are described as performing prodigies of might. Arjuna killed five hundred warriors simultaneously, covered the plain with dead, and filled rivers with blood; Yudhishthira "slaughtered a hundred men" in a mere twinkle; Bhima annihilated a monstrous elephant, including all mounted upon it, and fourteen foot-soldiers besides, with one blow of his club; Nakula and Sahadeva, when fighting from their chariots, cut off heads by the thousand, and sowed them like seed upon the ground. Of the weapons employed, about a hundred are named; and the conch shell which served as the trumpet of each leader had its distinct name, as had also the weapons of each of the chiefs.

The first great single combat was between Bhishma and Arjuna, which resulted in Bhishma being so transfixed with arrows

that "there was not a space of two fingers' breadth on his whole body unpierced. Bhishma falling from his chariot, his body could not touch the ground, surrounded as it was by countless arrows, reclining as it were on an arrowy couch. He had received from his father the power of fixing the time of his own death, and now declared that he intended retaining life till the sun entered the summer solstice. All the warriors on both sides ceased fighting that they might view this wonderful sight and do homage to their dying relative. As he lay on his arrowy bed, his head hanging down, he begged for a pillow, whereupon the chiefs brought him soft supports, which the hardy old soldier sternly rejected. Arjuna made a rest for him with three arrows, which Bhishma quite approved; and soon afterwards asked Arjuna to bring him water. Arjuna struck the ground with an arrow, and forthwith a pure spring burst forth, which so refreshed Bhishma that he called for Duryodhana, and begged him, before it was too late, to restore half the kingdom to the Pāndavas."

Drona, the tutor of the princes, is appointed to take the command of the Kuru army after the fall of Bhishma; and a number of single combats are described. Bhima's son by the Rākshasi Hidimbā is slain by Karna; Drupada's son, Dhrishtadyumna, the leader of the Pāndus, overcomes Drona; Drona being a Brāhman, when overpowered by his foe, voluntarily laid down his life, and is conducted to heaven "in a glittering shape like the sun," to save Dhrishtadyumna from the enormous crime of killing a Brāhman. Karna was now made leader of the Kurus in place of Drona. Bhima next slew Duhsāsana, and, remembering how this prince had insulted Draupadi, he drank the blood of his fallen foe. Arjuna next slew Karna, and Salya, King of Madra, was appointed to fill the vacant post. Bhima challenges Salya, and the following is the account of their encounter:—

"Soon as he saw his charioteer struck down,
Straightway the Madra monarch grasped his mace,
And like a mountain, firm and motionless,
Awaited the attack. The warrior's form

Was awful as the world-consuming fire,
Or as the noose-armed god of death, or as
The peaked Kailāsa, or the Thunderer
Himself, or as the trident-bearing god,
Or as a maddened forest elephant.
Him to defy did Bhīma hastily
Advance, wielding aloft his massive club.
A thousand conchs and trumpets, and a shout,
Firing each champion's ardour, rent the air.
From either host, spectators of the fight,
Burst forth applauding cheers: 'The Madra king
Alone,' they cried, 'can bear the rush of Bhīma:'
'None but heroic Bhīma can sustain
The force of Salya.' Now like two fierce bulls
Sprang they towards each other, mace in hand.
And first, as cautiously they circled round,
Wielding their weapons as in sport, the pair
Seemed matched in equal combat. Salya's club,
Set with red fillets, glittered as with flame;
While that of Bhīma gleamed like flashing lightning.
Anon the clashing irons met, and scattered round
A fiery shower; then, fierce as elephants
Or butting bulls, they battered each the other.
Thick fell the blows, and soon each stalwart
Spattered with gore, glowed like the Kinsuk
Bedecked with scarlet blossoms; yet beneath
The rain of strokes, unshaken as a rock,
Bhīma sustained the mace of Salya, he
With equal firmness bore the other's blows.
Now, like the roar of crashing thunder-clouds,
Sounded the clashing iron; then, their clubs
Brandished aloft, eight paces they retired,
And swift again advancing to the fight
Met in the midst like two huge mountain crags
Hurled into contact. Nor could either bear
The other's shock; together down they rolled,
Mangled and crushed, like two tall standards fallen."[2]

Yudhishthira then fought with and eventually slew Salya. After suffering continual reverses, the Kurus rallied for a final charge, which led to so great a slaughter, that only four of their leaders—Duryodhana, Aśvatthāman (son of Drona), Kritavarman, and Kripa—remained, whilst "nothing remained of eleven whole armies." Whereupon Duryodhana resolved upon flight, and

taking refuge in a lake, by his magical power support it so as to form a chamber round his body." The Pāndus discovered his retreat, but when taunted by them he told them to take the kingdom, as his brothers having all been slain, he had no pleasure in life. At last, enraged by the sarcasms of his cousins, he came forth and fought with Bhīma, from whom he received his death-wound. The remaining three Kuru chiefs left their wounded companion and took refuge in a forest.

Whilst resting under a tree at night, Asvatthāman, seeing an owl approach stealthily and kill numbers of sleeping crows, the thought occurred to him that in this manner he might destroy the Pāndu army. Accordingly he quietly entered their camp, leaving Kripa and Kritavarman to watch the gates. Under cover of darkness they slew the whole of the army: the Pandu princes and Krishna, happening to be stationed outside the camp, alone escaped. These three then return to Duryodhana, and tell him what they had done. Hearing their narrative, his spirit revived [illegible] a moment; he thanked them, bade them farewell, and [illegible]

[illegible] obsequies of this chief are performed, and Yu[illegible] installed as King of Hastināpur. But he is most [illegible] thinks of the great slaughter that has taken place. [illegible]hna's advice, he and his brothers visit Bhīshma, who was still [illegible]gering on his "spiky bed." For fifty-eight nights he had lain there, and ere his departure gave utterance to a series of most lengthy didactic discourses, after which his spirit ascended to the skies.

As Yudhishthira was entering the capital in triumph, an incident occurred to lessen his joy in victory. A Rākshas named Charvāka, disguised as a Brāhman, met him and reproached him for the slaughter he had caused; but the Brāhmans, discovering the imposture, consumed the Rākshas to ashes with the fire of their eyes. Yet even now the spirit of the king is not at rest. He therefore, after a little time, resigns his kingdom, and, together with his brothers and Draupadī, starts on his journey towards Indra's heaven on Mount Meru.

"When the four brothers knew the high resolve of King Yudhishthira,
Forthwith with Draupadī they issued forth, and after them a dog
Followed; the king himself went out the seventh from the royal city.
And all the citizens and women of the palace walked behind;
But none could find it in their heart to say unto the king, 'Return.'
And so at length the train of citizens went back, bidding adieu."

These went, "bent on abandonment of worldly things, their hearts yearning for union with the Infinite." In their journey they reach the sea, and there Arjuna cast away his bow and quiver. At last they came in sight of Mount Meru, and Draupadī "lost hold of her high hope, and faltering fell upon the earth." One by one the others fall, until only Yudhishthira, Bhīma, and the dog are left. Bhīma cannot understand why such pure beings should die: when his brother informs him that Draupadī's fall was the *result of her excessive affection for Arjuna*; that Sahadeva's death was the result of pride in his own knowledge; that Nakula's personal vanity was his ruin, and that Arjuna's fault was a boastful confidence in his power to destroy his foes. Bhīma now falls, and is told that the reason of his death is his selfishness, pride, and too great love of enjoyment. Yudhishthira, left alone with the dog, is walking on:

"When, with a sudden sound that rang through earth and heaven, the mighty god
Came towards him in a chariot, and he cried, 'Ascend, O resolute prince.'
Then did the king look back upon his fallen brothers, and addressed
These words unto the Thousand-eyed in anguish: 'Let my brothers here
Come with me. Without them, O god of gods, I could not wish to enter
E'en heaven: and yonder tender princess Draupadī, the faithful wife,
Worthy of endless bliss, let her come too. In mercy hear my prayer.'"

Indra informs him that the spirits of Draupadī and his brothers are already in heaven, but that he alone is permitted to enter heaven in bodily form. The king asks that the dog may accompany him. But as this is refused, he declines to go alone. Indra says: "You have abandoned your brothers; why not forsake the dog?" Yudhishthira replies: "I had no power to bring them back to life; how can there be abandonment of those who no longer live?" It now appears that the dog was no other

than his father Dharma in disguise, who, assuming his proper form, offers heaven with him.

On entering heaven, though Duryodhana and his cousins are there, as he does not see Arjuna and the rest, he declines to remain without them. An angel accompanies him to the hell where they are supposed to be, and he there hears their voices calling upon him for help. He therefore bids the angel depart, preferring rather to suffer with his brethren than to be in heaven without them. As soon as his resolution is taken, the scene suddenly changes, and it appears that this was simply a trial of his faith. He bathes in the heavenly Ganges, and in heaven, with Draupadi and his brothers, he finds the rest and happiness that were unattainable on earth."

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CHAPTER V.

THE PLANETS.

"At the great festivals of the Hindus a small offering is made to all the planets at once; but, excepting on these occasions, they are never worshipped together. They are, however, frequently worshipped separately by the sick or unfortunate who suppose themselves to be under the baneful influence of one or other of them. At these times they are worshipped one after the other in regular succession." * Seven of the planets give names to the days of the week; the other two represent the ascending and descending nodes. Surya and Chandra (Soma) have already been noticed at length amongst the Vedic Deities; they are again described briefly along with the planets, under the names they bear in this connexion.

"To Surya or Ravi are offered in the burnt sacrifice small pieces of the shrub *arka* (*Asclepias gigantica*); to Chandra those of the *palāsa* (*Butea frondosa*); to Mangala (Mars) those of the *khudira* (*Mimosa catechu*); to Budha (Mercury) those of the *apāmārga* (*Achyranthes aspera*); to Vrihaspati (Jupiter) those of *aswattha* (*Ficus religiosa*); to Sukra (Venus) those of the *udumbara*; to Sani (Saturn) those of the *Sami* (*Mimosa albida*) to Rāhu (the ascending node) blades of *Darva* grass; and to Ketu (the descending node) blades of *Kusa* grass." †

"The image of Surya is a round piece of mixed metal, twelve fingers in diameter; of Chandra, a piece like a half-moon, a cubit from end to end; of Mangala, a triangular piece six fingers

* Ward, ii. 70. † Ibid.

in width; of Budha, a golden bow two fingers in breadth; of Vrihaspati, a piece like a lotus; of Sukra, a square piece of silver; of Sani, an iron scimitar; of Rahu, an iron makara (a fabulous animal, half stag and half fish); and of Ketu, an iron snake."*

1. SAVI (the Sun), hence Ravibāra (Sunday), is the son of Kasyapa and Aditi. Though as Surya he is daily worshipped, as Ravi he is only worshipped at the greater festivals. "The 'Jyotishtatwa,' a great work on astrology, says that if a person is born under the planet Ravi, he will possess an anxious mind, be subject to disease and other sufferings, be an exile, a prisoner, and suffer the loss of wife, children, and property."†

2. CHANDRA or SOMA, hence Somavāra (Monday). "If a person be born under the planet Soma, he will have many friends; will possess elephants, horses, and palanquins; be honourable and powerful; will live upon excellent food, and rest on superb couches." A race of kings are said to be the descendants of Soma by his wife Rohini (the Hyades), who are called the children of the moon.

3. MANGALA, hence Mangalavāra (Tuesday), is represented as a red man with four arms riding on a sheep; he wears a red necklace and clothes of the same colour. "If a person be born under the planet Mangala, he will be full of anxious thoughts, wounded with offensive weapons, imprisoned, oppressed with fear of robbers, fire, &c., and will lose his lands, trees, and good name." This deity is identical with Kartikeya.

4. BUDHA‡ hence Budhavāra (Wednesday), was the son of Soma by Tara, the wife of Vrihaspati, the preceptor of the gods. At his birth, on the confession of his mother that he was Soma's son, her husband reduced her to ashes. Brahma afterwards raised her to life, and, being purified by the fire, her husband received her back. Samudra (the Sea), incensed at his son for the great crime of dishonouring his preceptor's wife, disinherited

* Ward, 6: 71. † Page 72.

‡ This Budha must not be confounded with Buddha, the Incarnation of Vishnu.

him; but, owing to his sister* Lakshmi's influence, part of his sin was removed, and he became bright as the moon when three days old; and, through her intercession with Párvati, he was restored to heaven, by being placed on Siva's forehead, who, thus ornamented, went to a feast of the gods. Vrihaspati on seeing Chandra again in heaven was greatly incensed, but was appeased on Brahma's declaring that the lascivious god should be excluded from heaven and placed amongst the stars; and that the sin which had obscured his glory should remain for ever. "If a person be born under the planet Budha, he will be fortunate, obtain an excellent wife," &c.

5. VRIHASPATI, hence Vrihaspativára (Thursday), was the preceptor of the gods, and is regarded as identical with Agni, as almost the same epithets are applied to both in the Vedic hymns. In later times he is said to be a Rishi, a son of Angiras. "If a person be born under this planet, he will be endowed with an amiable disposition, possess palaces, gardens, lands, and be rich in money and corn. He will possess much religious merit, and have all his wishes gratified. Brāhmans, however, will not be so fortunate as those of other castes, for Vrihaspati being a Brāhman does not wish to exalt those of his own caste."

6. SUKRA, hence Sukravára (Friday), was the son of Bhrigu. He was the preceptor and priest of the demons, and blind in one eye. The reason of this affliction is told in the following legend: When Vishnu, in the Dwarf Incarnation, went to Bali, King of the Daityas, to solicit a blessing, Sukra, as Bali's preceptor, forbade the king to give him anything. The king being determined to give what was asked, it was the duty of the priest to read the customary formula and to pour out water from a vessel as a ratification of the gift. Sukra, anxious to prevent his master from giving what was asked, as he foresaw that it would prove his ruin, entered the water in an invisible form, and by his magical powers prevented it from falling. Vishnu, aware of the device, put a straw into the vessel which, entering Sukra's eye,

* Soma (the Moon) and Lakshmi were produced together at the churning of the ocean.

gave him so much pain that he could remain there no longer; so the water fell, the gift was ratified, and Sukra lost an eye. "If a person be born under the planet Sukra, he will have the faculty of knowing things past, present, and future. He will have many wives, a kingly umbrella (an emblem of royalty), and other kings will worship him."

Sukra is said to have possessed the power of raising the dead, as the following legend* shows:—Devajani, the daughter of Sukra, was deeply in love with Kacha, the son of Vrihaspati and a pupil of her father, who had been sent to Sukra for the express purpose of learning from him the incantation for raising the dead. One day Devajani sent Kacha to gather flowers from a wood belonging to some giants, who had on previous occasions eaten him; but Sukra, by the above incantation, had restored him to life. The giants now resolved to make Sukra himself eat the boy; for which purpose, when they caught him in the forest, they cut him into small pieces, boiled him in spirits, and invited Sukra to an entertainment. As Kacha did not return with the flowers, Devajani with many tears told her father that, if he did not restore her lover, she would certainly destroy herself. Sukra learned by the power of meditation that he had eaten the boy; but did not know how to restore him to life, without the attempt being fatal to himself. At length, whilst the boy was in his stomach, he restored him to life, and then taught him the incantation he was so wishful to learn. Kacha, tearing open Sukra's stomach, came forth, and immediately using the wonderful incantation restored his teacher to life.

7. SANI, hence Sanivara (Saturday), is said to be the son of Surya and Chhāya, the servant whom his wife Savarnā substituted for herself; or, according to other accounts, he sprang from Balarāma and Revati. He is represented as a black man, clothed in black garments, riding on a vulture, with four arms. "If a person be born under the planet Sani, he will be slandered, his riches dissipated, his son, wife, and friends destroyed; he will live at variance with others and endure many sufferings." Many

* Ward, ii. 71.

stories are told of his evil influence, consequently the Hindus are under fear of evil from this planet. It was Sani who was said to have burnt off Ganesa's head.

8. *Rahu* (the ascending node) was the son of Vrihaspati and Simhika. He is described as a black man, riding on a lion. "If a person be born under the planet Rāhu, his wisdom, riches and children will be destroyed; he will be exposed to many afflictions and be subject to his enemies." According to the popular notions of the Hindus, at the time of an eclipse Rāhu devours the sun and moon; hence, as soon as an eclipse is noticed, the people make a dreadful noise, shouting, blowing horns, and beating drums, to cause Rāhu to restore these luminaries. The reason of this custom is probably found in the following story:—Rāhu was originally an Asura or giant, who took his present form at the churning of the sea. When the gods and demons churned the ocean, Surya and Chandra, who were sitting together, hinted to Vishnu, when the Amrita appeared, that one of the demons had tasted it. Vishnu immediately cut off the head of the offender; but as he had drunk of the water of life, neither head nor trunk could perish. The head, taking the name of Rāhu, and the trunk, that of Ketu, were placed in heaven as the ascending and descending nodes, and leave was granted, as a means of revenge on Surya and Chandra, that on certain occasions Rāhu should approach these gods and render them unclean, so that their bodies at these times become thin and black.*

* Ward, ii. 81.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ASURAS.

IN the Purānas and other of the later writings of the Hindus, and also in the popular mind, the Asuras are powerful evil beings; in translations the word is represented by such terms as demons, giants, &c. As the Suras * were the gods, *the A-suras* were not-gods, and therefore the enemies or opponents of the gods. In the Vedas the name Asura is applied more frequently to the gods themselves than to their enemies, whilst it is also used very much in the same manner as in the later writings. In the Rig-Veda, Varuna is accosted as follows:—"King Varuna has made a highway for the sun to go over. O thou wise Asura and king, loosen our sins!" Again: "The all-knowing Asura established the heavens, and fixed the limits of the earth. He sat as the supreme ruler of all worlds. These are the works of Varuna." "Asura stands for the Supreme Spirit," in another verse, and "also as an appellative for Prajāpati or creation's lord."† Again and again Varuna alone, and also in conjunction with Mitra, is called an Asura. "All the Vedic gods have shared the same title, not excepting even goddesses." "Varuna was the all-knowing Asura, Prajāpati the Supreme Being, Indra the Adityas, Tvastri, Mitra, Rudra, Agni, Vāyu, Pushan, Savitri, Brihaspati the sacrificial priests, were all Asuras. In fine, Deva (god) and Asura were synonymous expressions in a multitude of texts."‡

* Originally the Suras were a class of inferior deities connected with Surya; afterwards the term was employed to signify the gods generally.
† Dr. Haug, 'Indica,' 'Bengal Mag.,' April 1880. ‡ Ibid.

On the other hand, in the Rig-Veda, Indra is the destroyer of Asuras. "The same Veda which speaks of the Asuras as celestial beings supplies its readers also with the Mantras by means of which Devas overcame Asuras." The texts which are condemnatory of the Asuras as impure and ungodly are far less in number than those which recognise the term as applicable to gods and priests." Dr. Banerjea, in the most interesting and ingenious article from which the above extracts are made, suggests a means of reconciling these contradictory uses of the word "Asura." Before the Indo-Aryans arrived in India, they had lived in close proximity to the Persians, the original worshippers of fire. "What could be more natural," he asks, "than that the Asura-Pracheta, or Asura-Viswaveda of the one branch, was but the translation of the Ahura-Mazda (the Wise Lord, according to the "Zend-Avesta") of the other branch, and that the word "Ahura," which the one used in a divine sense, would become a household word in the other branch, in the same sense;" the word "Ahura" being changed into "Asura," in a way common to many other words. He then goes on to say, that as "Assur" was the term used in Assyria for the Supreme Lord, and the Assyrians were for some time the rulers of the Persians, it was natural that this word should find its way into Persia, the only change being this, that the Persians added Mazda (wise or good) to the term "Assur," and the Indo-Aryans received it from them. So much for the good use of the term "Asura."

But the word "Assur" was not only used for the Supreme Lord, it also represented the Assyrian nation, his worshippers, who were most cruel in their treatment of their foes; and as, later on, the bitterest hatred is known to have existed between the Indo-Aryans and the Persians, the followers of Ahura-Mazda, Dr. Banerjea concludes that owing to the cruelties perpetrated by the Assyrians on the one hand, and the hatred cherished towards them by the Persians on the other, the branch of the Aryan family that migrated into India brought with them very bitter feelings towards Assur (the Assyrian people) and Ahuri (the belongings of Ahura); and thus the term "Asura," which at one time was considered a becoming epithet for the Supreme

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Being, became descriptive only of those who were the enemies of the gods.

Whatever be the cause of it, there is no doubt that at the present day, and throughout the later writings of the Hindus, the term "Asura" is used only for the enemies of the gods. In the 'Taittiriya Sanhita'* we read "that the gods and Asuras contended together, and that the former, being less numerous than the latter, took some bricks, and placing them in a proper position to receive the sacrificial fire, with the formula, 'Thou art a multiplier,' they became numerous." In the 'Satapatha Brâhmana'† it is said that "the gods and Asuras, both descendants of Prajâpati,‡ obtained their father's inheritance, truth and falsehood. The gods, abandoning falsehood, adopted truth; the Asuras, abandoning truth, adopted falsehood. Speaking truth exclusively, the gods became weaker, but in the end became prosperous; the Asuras, speaking falsehood exclusively, became rich, but in the end succumbed." The gods tried to sacrifice, but though interrupted at first by the Asuras, at length succeed, and so became superior to the Asuras. Another legend in the same book teaches that the Asuras, when offering sacrifices, pierced the oblations in their own mouths, whilst the gods gave their oblations to each other; at length Prajâpati giving himself to them, sacrifice, which supplies the gods with food, became theirs.

Although there were frequent wars between the gods and Asuras, the Suras were not averse to receive the aid of the Asuras at the churning of the ocean; and some of the Asuras were not inferior in power and skill to the gods. Bali, one of their number, is worshipped by the Hindus on their birthdays, and Jalandhara conquered in battle even Vishnu himself. Indra and the other gods fled before him, and Siva, unaided, could not destroy him. Râhu is an Asura, and it was to destroy some of these mighty beings who distressed the gods, that Durgâ and

* Adhy. 6, b. 3, v. 15. † Ibid. iv. 60.

‡ The Mahâbhârata says the Asuras were the elder, the gods the younger, sons.

Kāli had to put forth their strength. In the constant wars between these rivals, Sukra, the preceptor of the Asuras, was frequently called to resuscitate the fallen. The following story of Jalandhara from the Uttara Khanda of the 'Padma Purana' will illustrate the teaching of the later Hindu Scriptures respecting the Asuras.

JALANDHARA.

The story of Jalandhara's birth and life was narrated by Nārada to the Pāndavas to encourage them when they were in distress on account of their misfortunes. He reminds them that adversity and prosperity come to all; Rāhu, who swallows the sun, is the same Rāhu whose head was severed from his body by Vishnu; and the valiant Jalandhara, the son of the Ocean and the river Ganges, who on one occasion conquered Vishnu, was himself slain by Siva. The mention of this fact excites the curiosity of his hearers; and in answer to their inquiry about him, Nārada gives the following history.

Indra and the other gods, arriving at Siva's home on Mount Kailāsa to pay him a visit, informed the bull Nandi, the chief of Siva's attendants, that they had come to amuse his master with song and dance. Siva invites them to enter, and, being delighted with their music, tells Indra to ask a boon, who, in a defiant tone, asks that he might be in battle a warrior like Siva himself. The boon is granted, and the gods depart. No sooner have they left than Siva asks his attendants if they had not noticed Indra's haughty tone, when immediately there stood before him a form of anger, black as darkness, who said to Siva, "Give me thy similitude, and then what can I do for you?" Siva tells him to incorporate himself with the river of heaven (Gangā), form a union between her and the Ocean, and conquer Indra.

In obedience to Siva's command, Gangā left the skies, and becoming united to the Ocean, from them a son proceeded, at

* Kennedy, 'Hindu Myth.,' p. 456.

whose birth the earth trembled and went, and the three worlds resounded with noise. Brahma coming to inquire the cause of this commotion, and asking to see the child, Ganga lays it in his lap, when it seized his head, and would not loose it until its father opened its hand. Brahma, admiring the child's strength, said "From his holding so firmly, let him be named Jalandhara," and bestowed upon him this boon, that he "should be unconquered by the gods and enjoy the three worlds."

Jalandhara's boyhood was full of wonders. Borne up by the wind, he flew over the ocean; his pets were lions which he had caught; and the largest birds and fishes were subject to him. When he grew up to manhood, at Sukra's request, his father withdrew the sea from Jambadwipa, the residence of holy men, which became his home, and bearing his name has become celebrated. Maya, the architect of the Asuras, there built him a beautiful city, his father installed him as king, and Sukra gave him the charm by which he could raise the dead to life. He married Vrinda, the daughter of an Apsaras named Swarna, and soon after his wedding made war upon the gods.

In order to lead to a conflict, he sent a messenger to Indra, whom he found, "surrounded by three hundred and thirty-three millions of deities," to demand the restoration of the moon, the Amrita, elephant, horse, gem, tree, and other things of which he said Indra had robbed him, at the churning of his uncle, the Sea of Milk; and also to resign Swarga. As Indra refuses to accede to this request, Jalandhara raises an army of warriors having the heads of horses, elephants, camels, cats, tigers, and lions, with which Indra's abode is soon surrounded. The gods in their extremity resort to Vishnu for aid.

On Vishnu's arrival the battle commences. Multitudes are slain on both sides, but the gods, when wounded, resort to the mountains, where they find herbs which quickly restore them. At length the greater gods and the leaders of the Daityas personally engage; when Indra falls insensible, Rudra is taken prisoner, and Kuvera is laid low by a blow of a mace. After

The present Jullunder.

this the tide turns in favour of the gods. When Indra struck Bali the most costly gems dropped from his mouth; he therefore asked for his body, and with his thunderbolt cut it into many parts. "From the purity of his actions, the parts of his body became the germs of the various gems. From his bones came diamonds, from his eyes sapphires, from his blood rubies, from his marrow emeralds, from his flesh crystals, from his lungs coral, and from his teeth pearls."

Indra being in his turn attacked by Jalandhara, Vishnu comes to the rescue; and though the Asuras attack him in immense numbers, and the sky is dark with their arrows, Vishnu overthrows them as if they were leaves. One of their number, named Swabhanava, losing his head, seized hold of Garuda, when immediately the severed head rejoined his body; Garuda seeing this wonderful event flew off with his master. Jalandhara was prevented from following him far, as he had to call in the aid of Sukra to restore his warriors to life.

Hearing that the soldiers of the gods were also restored to life through using herbs obtained from an island called Drona, situated in the Sea of Milk, he asked his uncle to submerge it. Being deprived of this means of restoration, they appealed to Vishnu, who, attacking Jalandhara, was laid low by the Daitya, and would have been slain but for Lakshmi's intercession with her cousin. In return for his life Vishnu promised to remain near the Sea of Milk. Jalandhara, having now conquered the gods, enjoyed peace and happiness.

The gods, however, being expelled from heaven, and deprived of sacrifices and the Amrita, did not long remain contented with their lot. They went together to Brahma, who conducted them to Siva, whom they found "seated on a throne and attended by myriads of devoted servants, naked, deformed, curly-haired, with matted locks and covered with dust." On Brahma stating the case for the gods, Siva declared that, if Vishnu had been unsuccessful in fighting the demon, it was impossible that he alone could overcome him; he, therefore, advised that the gods should unite to form a weapon by which their common enemy might be destroyed. Acting on this advice, the gods, glowing

with anger, darted forth volumes of flames, to which Siva added the consuming beams of his third eye. Vishnu, too, when summoned, added his flame of anger, and asked Siva to destroy the Daitya, excusing himself from the task on the ground that Jalandhara was a relative of Lakshmi. Visvakarma and the deities were alarmed as they saw the glowing mass; but Siva, placing his heel on it, whirled round with it, and formed it into the discus, called Sudarsana, which sent forth such fiery beams that the gods cried out "Preserve us." Brahmā's beard was scorched as he took it into his hand,—"such is the result of offering a gift to a blockhead;" but Siva hid it under his arm.

Nārada informed Jalandhara of the intended attack of Siva, and, enlarging on Pārvati's beauty, excited him to attack her husband that he might win her. With this object he sent Rāhu as an ambassador, to summon Siva to submission. On his arrival at the court the envoy delivered his master's message to Siva, in the form of Panchanana, who did not deign to speak; but the snake Vasuki, falling to the ground from his hair, began to eat Ganesa's rat. Seeing this, Kartikeya's peacock made such an awful noise that the snake disgorged the rat and returned to his proper place. Lakshmi then entered the assembly with a vessel of Amrita, with which she resuscitated Brahmā's fifth head that was in Siva's hand; the head rolling on the ground uttered most boastful language, until myriads of hideous forms from Siva's locks quieted it. Rāhu, seeing all this, asked Siva to forsake his wife and children and live a mendicant's life. At a sign from Siva, Nandi, the bull, showed him the door; this was the answer vouchsafed to his illustrious master's demand.

War being determined on, Jalandhara marched first to Kailāsa; but finding that Siva had forsaken it and taken up a position on a mountain near Lake Mānasa, he surrounded the mountain with his troops. Nandi marches against them, and spread destruction "like the waters of the deluge;" reserves, however, being brought up, the army of the gods suffers loss. Pārvati, hearing that her sons, Ganesa and Kartikeya, are hardly pressed, urged her husband to go in person and put forth his energy, though not to expose himself unnecessarily. Before

leaving home, Siva carefully warned Parvati to be on her guard during his absence, as it was possible the Daitya in some disguise might visit her; after this, accompanied by Virabhadra and Manibhadra, two forms of his anger, he went to the field of battle. When the conflict between the Daityas and the attendants of Siva had continued for some time, Jalandhara devised a plan by which he hoped to succeed more easily than by fighting. Giving his own form and the command of his troops to a chief, the Daitya king assumed the form of Siva, changed Durvarana into Nandi, and, taking the heads of Ganesa and Kartikeya under his arms, hastened to Siva's abode. Seeing this, Parvati was overwhelmed with grief; but having some doubt of his being the real Siva, she hid herself and would not listen to his overtures of love. To make certain of his identity, she caused one of her attendants to assume her form and visit the Daitya, who, returning with the information that he was not the true Siva, Parvati hid herself in a lotus, and her companions were changed into bees which hovered around her.

In the meantime Vishnu had been more successful with Vrinda, the wife of Jalandhara. In the guise of a Brāhman, he made a hermitage near her palace, and caused her to dream that she saw her husband's head severed from his body, his flesh eaten by wild animals, and his eyes plucked out by vultures. Distracted with this dream, in a high fever she rushed into the forest, where an Ogress met her, ate her mules, and was about to attack her, when the Brāhman came to her rescue. On reaching the hermitage, Vishnu induced her to enter, changed himself into the form of her husband, and there they lived together for some time. At length Vrinda, seeing through the disguise, cursed Vishnu, telling him that, as he had wronged Jalandhara, he would himself be wronged, and, having purified herself from her sin, died. Her body was burned, her mother collected the ashes, and threw them into the Ganges. The forest in which she was burned has ever since borne the name of Vrindavana,* near Mount Govardhana.

* Brindaban.

Jalandhara, hearing of his wife's deception and death, was mad with rage, and, leaving the neighbourhood of Parvati's home, returned to the field of battle. By Sukra's power his dead heroes were restored to life, and a grand final charge was made. At length Siva and Jalandhara personally fight; after a desperate encounter, in which the Daitya employs various magical powers, Siva cuts off his head, but it is no sooner severed than it resumes its place. Siva, in his extremity summons to his aid the female forms or energies of the gods, Brahmi, Vaishnavi, and the rest, who drink up the blood of the giant, and with their aid Siva succeeds in destroying him, and the gods regain their kingdom and possessions.

CHAPTER VII.

SACRED ANIMALS AND BIRDS.

Some of the animals regarded as sacred have already been mentioned in connexion with the deities to whom they are specially dear, and in whose worship they participate. They are regarded as the Vāhans, or vehicles, upon which these gods and goddesses travel. Thus Indra rides upon the elephant Airavata; Siva on the bull Nandi; Yama on a buffalo; Durgā, as Singhavāhini, on a lion; as Durgā on a tiger; Agni on a ram; Vāyu on an antelope; Ganesa on a rat, and Sasti on a cat. Vīrabhadra, the emanation of Siva which destroyed Daksha's sacrifice, rode on a dog, and Kāmadeva travelled either on the monster Makara or a parrot. The jackal is regarded as a representative of Durgā, who in this form assisted in preserving Krishna, on the night of his birth, from Kansa's anger. Monkeys, as representatives of Hanumān, are very commonly worshipped; the dog, though worshipped by some, by others is regarded as unclean.

Amongst birds, the goose is the Vāhan of Brahmā, the peacock that of Kartikeya, Sani rides upon a vulture; the Brahmani kite is said to be a form of Durgā, and the Khanjana, or wag-tail, represents Vishnu, because the mark on its throat is thought to resemble the Sālgrāma; the owl, too, is worshipped at the festivals of Kartikeya, Brahmā, and Lakshmi. Garuda, the Vāhan of Vishnu, and Jatāyus and Sampāti, the vultures who assisted Rāma, will be described separately.

The cows though not regarded as the Vāhan of any deity, is worshipped too. Brahmā is said to have created cows and Brāhmans at the same time; the Brāhman to officiate at worship, and the cow to provide milk, *ghi*, &c., as offerings.

whilst cow-dung is necessary for various purifying ceremonies. Regular worship of the cow takes place yearly, at which similar ceremonies are performed to those which are employed at the worship of images; the horns and bodies of the cows are painted, and they are then bathed in the rivers. Some people are said to worship the cow daily.

GARUDA.

Garuda or Suparna is a mythical being, half-man and half-eagle, the Vāhan of Vishnu. Though not strictly divine, he appears frequently in all Vishnu's exploits, and, being worshipped together with his lord, it is necessary to give some description of his birth and deeds.

GARUDA.

When Daksha's sons refused to people the world, he produced sixty daughters, thirteen of whom he gave to Kasyapa the sage; of these, two come into prominence in connexion with Garuda. "Vinatā bore him two celebrated sons, Garuda and Aruna; the former, also called Suparna, was the king of the feathered tribes, and the remorseless enemy of the serpent race." Aruna became famous as the charioteer of the Sun. "The progeny of Kadru (the other sister) were a thousand powerful many-headed snakes, of immeasurable might, subject to Garuda."* The mother of Garuda is said to have laid an egg; hence her son assumed a bird-like form.

Another legend makes "Garuda the son of Kasyapa and Diti.

* 'Vishnu Purāna,' p. 119.

This all-prolific dame laid an egg, which, it was predicted, would yield her a deliverer from some great evil. After the lapse of five hundred years, Garuda sprang from the egg, flew to Indra's abode, extinguished the fire that surrounded it, conquered its guards, and bore off the Amrita, which enabled him to liberate his captive mother. A few drops of the immortal beverage falling on some *Kusa* grass, it became eternally consecrated, and the serpents greedily licking it, so lacerated their tongues with the sharp grass, that they have ever since remained forked; but the boon of immortality was ensured to them by their partaking of the Amrita." * " As soon as Garuda was born, his body expanded till it touched the sky; the other animals were numbed. His eyes were like the lightning. The mountains were driven away with the wind caused by the flapping of his wings. The rays which issued from his body set the four quarters of the world on fire; the affrighted gods imagining that Garuda must be an incarnation of Agni, resorted to that deity for protection." †

Garuda is the mortal enemy of snakes. His mother Vinata quarrelled with her sister, Kadru, the mother of the snakes, respecting the colour of the horse that was produced at the churning of the ocean; since that time there has been constant enmity between their descendants. On the occasion of his marriage, the serpents, alarmed at the thought of his having children who might destroy them, made a fierce attack on him; but the result was that he slew them all, save one, which he has ever since worn as an ornament round his neck. To this day superstitious Hindus repeat the name of Garuda three times before going to sleep at night, as a safeguard against snakes.

The following legend from the Mahábhárata ‡ gives the accounts of his liberating his mother from servitude, and of his appointment as the Vahan of Vishnu. His mother, having lost her wager with her sister respecting the colour of the sea-produced horse, was reduced to servitude to the serpents, who, being anxious to become immortal, promised to liberate her on

* Moor's 'Hindu Pantheon,' 341. † Ward, ii. 200. ‡ Ibid. ii. 201.

condition that her son Garuda should bring them Chandra (the Moon), whose bright spots are filled with Amrita. Before starting on this expedition he went to his mother for food, who advised him to go to the sea-shore and gather whatever he could find, but entreated him to be most careful not to eat a Brahman; adding, "Should you at any time feel a burning sensation in your stomach, be sure you have eaten a Brahman."

After receiving this warning, he set off on his journey. Passing through a country inhabited by fishermen, he at one inspiration drew in houses, trees, cattle, men, and other animals. But among the inhabitants swallowed one was a Brahman, who caused such an intolerable burning in his stomach that Garuda, unable to bear it, called in the greatest haste for him to come out. The Brāhman refused unless his wife, a fisherman's daughter, might accompany him. To this Garuda consented.

Pursuing his journey, Garuda met his father, Kasyapa (the shines as the Pole Star), who directed him to appease his hunger at a certain lake where an elephant and tortoise were fighting. The tortoise was eighty miles long, and the elephant one hundred and sixty. Garuda with one claw seized the elephant, with the other the tortoise, and perched with them on a tree eight hundred miles high. But the tree was unable to bear the ponderous weight, and, unhappily, thousands of pigmy Brāhmans were then worshipping on one of its branches. Trembling lest he should destroy any of them, he took the bough in his beak, continuing to hold the elephant and tortoise in his claws, and flew to a mountain in an uninhabited country, where he finished his repast on the tortoise and elephant.

Garuda having surmounted astonishing dangers, at last seized the moon and concealed it under his wing. On his return, however, being attacked by Indra and the gods, he overcame all, excepting Vishnu. Even Vishnu was so severely put to it in the contest, that he came to terms with Garuda, made him immortal, and promised him a higher seat than his own; while on his part Garuda became the Vāhan or carrier of Vishnu. Since then, Vishnu rides upon Garuda, while the latter, in the shape of a flag, sits at the top of Vishnu's car.

In the Rāmāyana Garuda is represented as doing great service to Rāma and his followers, and his powers and peculiarities are repeatedly referred to. Thus, in the description of Hanumān it is said, that

> "Like thunderbolt in frame was he,
> And swift as Garud's self could flee."*

In like manner it is said of two heroes:

> "Sugrīva, offspring of the Sun,
> And Bali, Indra's mighty one,
> They, both endowed with Garud's might,
> And skilled in all the arts of fight,
> Wandered in arms the forest through,
> And lions and snakes and tigers slew."†

When Ansumān found the ashes of the sixty thousand sons of Sāgar,‡ who, owing to Kapila's curse, had been destroyed and was in distress because he could obtain no water with which to offer oblations for the dead, he sees their uncle—

> "King Garud, best beyond compare,
> Of birds who wing the fields of air.
> Then thus unto the weeping man
> The son of Vinātā began:
> 'Grieve not, O hero, for their fall
> Who died a death approved of all.'"§

Garuda then tells Ansumān that if he can succeed in inducing Gangā to descend from heaven, and with her streams to touch these ashes, the dead shall return to life, and finally ascend to Indra's heaven.

In the description of the city of Ayodha, when Rāma had gone into the forest, is a reference to Garuda's antipathy to snakes:

> "The city wore
> No look of beauty as before—
> Like a dull river on a lake
> By Garud robbed of every snake."‖

In the following lines is an account of Garuda's resting on a

* Griffith's 'Rāmāyana,' i. 94. † Ibid. i. 96. ‡ See Gangā.
§ Griffith's 'Rāmāyana,' i. 186. ‖ Ibid. ii. 167.

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tree when he was carrying off the elephant and the tortoise as narrated above. Rāvaṇa, impelled by the accounts of Sītā's beauty, goes to see her, and on his journey

> "He saw a ng-tree like a cloud,
> With mighty branches earthward bowed.
> It stretched a hundred leagues, and made
> For hermit bands a welcome shade.
> Thither the feathered king of yore
> An elephant and tortoise bore,
> And lighted on a bough to eat
> The captives of his taloned feet.
> The bough, unable to sustain
> The crushing weight and sudden strain,
> Loaded with sprays and leaves of spring,
> Gave way beneath the feathered king.
>
> * * *
>
> The feathered monarch raised the weight
> Of the huge bough, and bore away
> The loosened load and captured prey.
>
> * * *
>
> His soul conceived the high emprise
> To snatch the Amṛit from the skies.
> He rent the nets of iron first
> Then through the jewel-chamber burst,
> And bore the drink of heaven away
> That watched in Indra's palace lay."[1]

In the great conflict with Rāvaṇa, as Rāma and his brother were wounded and well-nigh dead, owing to a flight of serpents sent by Indrajit, Garuḍa appeared to restore them, and thus enabled them to carry on the war. His approach and work are thus described:

> "The rushing wind grew loud,
> Red lightnings flashed from banks of cloud.
> The mountains shook, the wild waves rose,
> And smitten by resistless blows,
> Uprooted fell each stately tree
> That fringed the margin of the sea.
> All life within the waters feared;
> When, as the Vānars gazed, appeared

[1] Griffith's 'Rāmāyaṇa,' iii. 162.

King Garud's self, a wondrous [illegible]
Disclosed in flames of fiery light,
From his fierce eye in sudden [illegible]
All serpents in a moment fled,
And those transformed to shafts, that bound
The princes, vanished in the ground.
On Raghu's sons his eyes he bent,
And hailed the lords omnipotent.
Then o'er them stooped the feathered king,
And touched their faces with his wing,
His healing touch their pangs allayed,
And closed each rent the shafts had made.
Again their eyes were bright and bold;
Again the smooth skin shone like gold."*

For this great work of restoration Rāma expressed his gratitude, whereupon Garuda replied:

"*In me, O Raghu's son, behold*
One who has loved thee from of old,
Garud, the lord of all that fly,
Thy guardian and thy friend am I.
Not all the gods in heaven could loose
These numbing bonds, this serpent noose,
Wherewith fierce Rāvan's son, renowned
For magic arts, your limbs had bound.
Those arrows fixed in every limb
Were mighty snakes, transformed by him,
Bloodthirsty race, they live beneath
The earth, and slay with venomed teeth."

Garuda is represented in pictures and sculpture in various ways. Sometimes he has the head and wings of a bird, with a human body; sometimes he has a bird's claws; and at others he has a human face, and the body of a bird.

JATĀYUS AND SAMPĀTI.

Garuda had two sons, named Jatāyus and Sampāti, who also assisted Rāma. As he, Lakshman, and Sati reached the hermitage in the forest where they intended to remain, they saw "a

* Griffiths's 'Rāmāyana,' v. 153.

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and strength unparalleled." Struck with
quired who he was, when Jatāyus in-
age, and elected to be their friend:

"Thy ready helper will I be
And guard thy house, if thou agree:
When thou and Lakshman urge the chase,
By Sita's side shall be my place."*

JATĀYUS.

This offer was accepted; and when Rāma saw the stag which Rāvana sent to attract him from his home, he went after it with

* Griffith's "Ramayana," iii. 68.

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the greater sense of security because Jatāyus was there to guard his wife. When Rāvana seized Sita, she cried out to Jatāyus:

"Oh see, the king who rules the race
Of giants, cruel, fierce, and base!
Rāvan, the spoiler, hears me hence,
The helpless prey of violence." *

Jatāyus first tries by reasoning to lead Rāvana to restore Sita to her home, and warned him that death would result from his act of violence. When, however, neither advice nor threats availed, he prepared to fight:

"With clash and din and furious blows
Of murderous battle rent the skies:

Then fierce the dreadful combat raged,
As bird and bird in war engaged,
As if two winged mountains sped
To dire encounter overhead." †

Jatāyus succeeded in breaking Rāvana's bow, but

"A second bow soon armed his hand,
Whence pointed arrows swift and true
In hundreds, yea, in thousands, flew." ‡

The giant's arrows wounded the vulture; the vulture in return threw darts which injured Rāvana, struck the steeds of the chariot, and broke the chariot itself; whilst with his beak and claws he tore the coachman to pieces. Rāvana descended from his chariot and fought on foot; but gradually the strength of Jatāyus, who was weak with age, gave way. Rāvana, therefore, re-ascends the chariot and is about to fly through the air, when the vulture a second time intercepts his flight, and

"Swooped down upon the giant's back:
Down to the bone the talons went;
With many a wound the flesh was rent." §

* Griffith's 'Rāmāyana,' iii. 239. † Ibid. iii. 280. ‡ Ibid. iii. 257.
§ Ibid. iii. 240.

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Jatāyus was able to tear off the ten left arms of Rāvana, but unfortunately others grew to replace them. At length Rāvana seizes his sword, and, after giving the vulture a mortal blow, hurries off with Sita to Lanka.

When Rama and Lakshman commence their search for Sita, they come upon the dying bird, and, seeing the marks of blood upon him, at first think that he has been guilty; but, after hearing from him the story of Rāvana's visit and flight, they see the bird expire and perform his funeral rites.

In their search, reaching the sea-shore, but still ignorant of Sita's whereabouts, some of their monkey followers see an immense vulture, weak with age, who, hearing them mention Jatāyus' name, inquires of his welfare. When told that he had been slain by Rāvana, the vulture informs them that this victim of the giant was no other than his own brother; and in revenge assists them, by informing them where Rāvana and Sita were at that moment. He told them that he had Garuda's power to see immense distances, and, mounting into the sky, saw Lanka, and told the Vānar chiefs that the object of their search was there. Hearing this, Hanumān was despatched to communicate with Sita, and to assure her of Rāma's coming to rescue her.

CHAPTER VIII.

GANGĀ.

GANGĀ (the Ganges), the chief of the sacred streams of India, whose waters are said to have the power of cleansing from all past, present, and future sins, is believed to be divine, and the account of her birth and appearance on earth forms an interesting episode in the Rāmāyana. The story is told to Rāma by the hermit Viswamitra, as he was travelling with Rāma and his brother Lakshman. As soon as they reach the banks of the sacred stream,

GANGĀ.

"They bathed, as Scripture bids,
And paid
Oblations due to god and shade."

As soon as they were seated, Rāma said:

"O saint, I yearn
The three-pathed Ganga's tale to learn.

Thus urged, recounted both
The birth of Gangā and her growth:
'The mighty hill with metals stored,
Himālaya, is, the mountains' lord,
The father of a lovely pair
Of daughters, fairest of the fair.
Their mother, offspring of the will
Of Meru, everlasting hill,

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Mena, Himalaya's darling, graced
With beauty of her dainty waist.
Ganga was eldest-born: then came
The tall one known by Uma's name.
Then all the gods of heaven, in need
Of Ganga's help their vows to speed,
To great Himalaya came and prayed
The mountain king to yield the maid.
He, not regardless of the weal
Of the three worlds, with holy zeal
His daughter to the Immortals gave—
Ganga, whose waters cleanse and save,
Who roams at pleasure, fair and free,
Purging all sinners, to the sea.
The three-pathed Ganga thus obtained,
The gods their heavenly homes regained."*

The sage next tells Rāma that there was a mighty King of Ayodha named Sāgara,† who, being childless and most anxious to have a son, propitiated the saint Bhrigu (or, according to other accounts, his grandson) by penances extending over a hundred years. At length the saint, pleased with Sāgar's worship, said:

"'From thee, O Sāgar, blameless king,
A mighty host of sons shall spring,
And thou shalt win a glorious name,
Which none, O chief, but thou shalt claim;

* Griffith's 'Rámáyana,' i. 171.

† Sāgara's birth was supernatural. His father Bāhu, King of Ayodha, was expelled from his kingdom. The mother of Sāgara accompanied her husband to the forest, but, owing to a poisonous drug having been given her by a rival wife, she could not bring forth her son, with whom she had been pregnant for seven years. When her husband died, she wished to be burned with his body; but this was prevented by a sage named Aurva, who assured her that her son would yet be born, and grow up to be a mighty king. When he was born, Aurva gave him the name Sāgara (*Sa*, "with," and *gara*, "poison"). Aurva himself was also born in an extraordinary manner. A king named Krītavīrya was very liberal to the Bhrigus, and through his liberality they became rich. His descendants being poor, they asked help of the Bhrigus. On this being refused them, they made an onslaught on the Brāhmans of this family, slaying all they could find, even to children in the womb. One woman concealed her unborn child in her thigh. The Kshattriyas, hearing of this, tried to slay him, but he issued from his mother's thigh with such lustre that he blinded his persecutors. And because he was born from the thigh (*urw*) of his mother, he was called Aurva.

One of thy queens a son shall bear,
Maintainer of thy race and heir;
And of the other there shall be
Some sixty thousand born to thee."*

Hearing this, the wives are anxious to know which of them is to have the one son, and which the multitude; but this the Brahman leaves them to decide. Kesini wishes for the one son; and Sumati is pleased with the prospect of having sixty thousand.

"Time passed. The elder consort bare
A son called Ansumān, the heir.
Then Sumati, the younger, gave
Birth to a gourd, O hero brave,
Whose rind, when burst and cleft in two,
Gave sixty thousand babes to view.
All these with care the nurses laid
In jars of oil; and there they stayed,
Till, youthful age and strength complete,
Forth speeding from each dark retreat,
All peers in valour, years, and might,
The sixty thousand came to light." †

After a time King Sāgara determined to make an Aswamedha or horse sacrifice. Preparations for this are accordingly made, and Prince Ansumān, the son of the elder wife, is appointed by the king to follow the horse set apart for the sacrifice; for, according to the ritual, the horse was to be set free, and allowed for a whole year to wander wherever it would. Indra knowing the great merit that Sāgar would obtain by this sacrifice, and fearing that he might even lose his crown,

"Veiling his form in demon guise,
Came down upon the appointed day,
And drove the victim horse away." ‡

The officiating priest, being aware of this, cries out:

"Haste, king! now let the thief be slain;
Bring thou the charger back again;
The sacred rite prevented thus
Brings scathe and woe to all of us."

* Griffiths's 'Rāmāyana,' i. 174. † Ibid. i. 175. ‡ Ibid. i. 177.

King Sāgar, incited by the Brāhman, urges his sons to search until they find the stolen horse:

"Brave sons of mine, I know not how
These demons are so mighty now;
The priests began the rites so well,
All sanctified with prayer and spell.
If in the depths of earth he hide,
Or lurk beneath the ocean's tide,
Pursue, dear sons, the robber's track;
Slay him and bring the charger back.
The whole of this broad earth explore,
Sea-garlanded from shore to shore;
Yea, dig her up with might and main,
Until you see the horse again."*

The sons commence their search. Each digs a league in depth, and by this means they reach the centre of the earth, but cannot see the horse. Alarmed at their destructive work, the gods repair to Brahmā, and tell him what is happening. He cheers them with the information that Vishnu, in the form of Kapila, will protect the Earth, his bride, and that these sons of Sāgar will be consumed to ashes. The gods, encouraged by these words, repair to their home and patiently wait for deliverance.

After digging sixty thousand leagues into the earth without obtaining any tidings of the horse, the princes return to their father, asking what can be done. Sāgar commands them to dig on, and continue their search until the horse is found. At length they

"Saw Vāsudeva (Vishnu) standing there,
In Kapil's form he loved to wear;
And near the everlasting God
The victim charger cropped the sod.
They saw with joy and eager eyes
The fancied robber and the prize,
And on him rushed the furious band,
Crying aloud, 'Stand, villain! Stand!'

* Griffiths's 'Rāmāyana,' i. 177.

"Avaunt! avaunt!" great Kapil cried,
His bosom flush with passion's tide;
Then, by his might, that proud army
All scorched to heaps of ashes lay."*

Hearing no news of his sons, the king became anxious, and sent his grandson Ansumān to look after them. He inquires of all he meets on the earth, and is encouraged by the information that he shall certainly bring back the stolen horse. At length he reaches the spot where his brothers were consumed, and is overwhelmed with grief at their fate. At this moment his uncle Garuda appears and consoles him, saying:

"Grieve not, O hero, for their fall,
Who died a death approved of all.
Of mighty strength they met their fate
By Kapil's hand, whom none can mate.
Pour forth for them no earthly wave,
A holier flood their spirits crave.
If, daughter of the Lord of Snow,
Gangā would turn her stream below,
Her waves, that cleanse all mortal stain,
Would wash their ashes pure again.
Yea, when her flood, whom all revere,
Rolls o'er the dust that moulders here,
The sixty thousand, freed from sin,
A home in Indra's heaven shall win.
Go, and with ceaseless labours try
To draw the goddess from the sky.
Return, and with thee take the steed;
So shall thy grandsire's rite succeed."†

The prince takes the steed; the sacrifice is completed, and for 30,000 years King Sāgar was thinking how he could induce Gangā to come down from heaven. At length, not having succeeded in forming a successful plan, the monarch himself went to heaven. Ansumān reigned in his stead, who, in his turn, tried to find some means of liberating his brothers. His son Dilipa also made a similar, but equally unsuccessful, effort. It was given to Dilipa's son Bhagirath to accomplish this work.

* Griffiths's 'Rāmāyana,' i. 183. † Ibid. i. 186.

Bhagirath had no son. He, in order to obtain this boon, and also to free his kinsmen from their sad fate, practised most severe austerities, until at length Brahmā said:

"Best monarch, of a glorious race,
Thy fervent rites have won my grace.
Well hast thou wrought thine awful task;
Some boon in turn, O hermit, ask."*

To which Bhagirath replies as follows:

"Let Sagar's sons receive from me
Libations that they long to see.
Let Ganga with her holy wave
The ashes of the heroes lave,
That so my kinsmen may ascend
To heavenly bliss that ne'er shall end.
And give, I pray, O god, a son,
Nor let my house be all undone."

To this the god replies:

"As thou prayest, it shall be.
Ganga, whose waves in Swarga (Heaven) flow,
Is daughter of the Lord of Snow.
Win Siva that his aid be lent
To hold her in her mid descent,
For earth alone will never bear
These torrents hurled from upper air."†

Brahmā then re-ascended to the skies; but Bhagirath remained for a whole year

"With arms upraised, refusing rest,
While with one toe the earth he prest."

Siva, pleased with this devotion, promised to sustain the shock of the descent of the waters on his head; but Ganga was not at all pleased when commanded to descend to earth:

"'He calls me,' in her wrath she cried,
'And all my flood shall sweep
And whirl him in its whelming tide
To hell's profoundest deep.'"‡

* Griffiths's 'Rāmāyana,' i. 190. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid. i. 193.

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Siva, however, was a match for the wrathful deity. He held her in the coils of his hair until her anger abated, and then she fell into the Vindu lake, from whence proceed the seven sacred streams of India. This lake is not known; and of the seven streams mentioned, two only are familiar to geographers, the Ganges and the Indus. One branch of this stream followed Bhagirath wherever he went. On the way the waters flooded the sacrificial ground of Jahnu, a saint. In his anger he drank up its waters, and Bhagirath's work seemed to be fruitless. But at the intercession of the king and Brahmā, the saint allowed the waters to flow from his ears. From this fact one of the many names of Gangā is Jāhnavi, or daughter of Jahnu. At length Bhagirath reached the ocean, and descending to the depths where Sāgar's sons were lying, Gangā followed until her waters touched the ashes, when,

> "Soon as the flood their dust bedewed,
> Their spirits gained beatitude,
> And all in heavenly bodies dressed
> Rose to the skies' eternal rest."*

As a reward for his meritorious work, Brahmā said to him:

> "Long as the ocean's flood shall stand
> Upon the border of the land,
> So long shall Sāgar's sons remain,
> And, god-like, rank in heaven retain.
> Gangā thine eldest child shall be,
> Called from thy name Bhāgirathi."†

As a consequence of faith in this legend, one of the most frequented places of pilgrimage in India is Sāgar Island, the place where the river Ganges and ocean meet.

In addition to the Ganges, there are many other rivers regarded as sacred by the Hindus; the worship of these, and bathing in them, being productive of almost as great blessings as are to be obtained from Gangā herself. Some of these are considered as males and some as females. The following is not

* Griffiths's "Rāmayana," i. 196. † Ibid. i. 197.

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a complete list, but it contains the names of the rivers most generally known:

Male rivers:—The Sona and the Brahmaputra.

Female rivers:—The Godāvari, the Kāveri, the Atreyi, the Karatoyā, the Bāhudā, the Gomati, the Sarayu, the Gandaki, the Varahi, the Charmanwati, the Shatadru, the Vipāshā, the Goutami, the Karmanāshā, the Airāvati, the Chandrabhāgā, the Vitastā, the Sindhu, the Krishna, the Vetravati, the Bhairavā.*

* Ward, ii. 217.

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CHAPTER IX

SACRED TREES.

SEVERAL trees are regarded as sacred; they being representative of, or peculiarly dear to, some of the deities. It is a meritorious act to plant and water them, and such is the respect cherished for them, that even their withered branches are not

THE BANYAN TREE.

allowed to be burnt. The same ceremonies are observed at the planting of these trees, or, when they have been taken care of for some time, at their consecration, as are observed at the setting up of an image. The following are the names of the sacred trees :—

The Asvatta, or Pipul Tree (*Ficus religiosa*), sacred to Vishnu.

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The Vata, Banyan or Indian Fig Tree * (*Ficus Indica*), also sacred to Vishnu.

The Viva, or Wood-apple, or Bel Tree † (*Ægle Marmelos*), sacred to Siva.

The Vakula (*Mimusops Elengi*).

The Haritaki (*Terminalia chebula*).

The Amalaki, or *Emblic Myrobalans* (*Phyllanthus emblica*).

The Nimba, or Nim Tree ‡ (*Melia azadirachta*).

The Tulsi § (*Ocimum gratissimum* or *sanctum*).

The Tulsi is very commonly worshipped by the followers of Vishnu; and the plant is most carefully tended as his representative. Every morning the ground near it is cleaned with cow-dung and water; at night a lamp is hung near it. During the two hottest months of the year, a vessel of water is hung over it so that it can constantly receive moisture. When the plant dies, it is cast into the river, as an idol which has been worshipped would be when the worship is concluded. When a person is dying, it is a common custom to plant a sprig of Tulsi near his head. The origin of the worship of the Tulsi is said to be the following:—A woman named Tulsi engaged in religious austerities for a long period, and asked as a boon, that she might become the wife of Vishnu. Lakshmi, hearing of this, cursed her, and changed her into the plant which bears her name. Vishnu, however, comforted his follower with the assurance that he would assume the form of the Shālgrāma, and continue near her.‖ The Vāyu and the Padma Purānas teach that the Tulsi was one of the products of the churning of the ocean.

In addition to these trees should be mentioned the *Durva* grass (*Agrostis linearis*) and *Kusa* grass (*Poa cynosuroides*), which form part of the offerings made to the gods; as do all the leaves or flowers of most of the trees previously mentioned. The Mahābhārata has a legend accounting for the sacredness of the Kusa grass. When Garuda brought some of the Amrita

* See p. 393. † See p. 390. ‡ See p. 411.
§ See p. 400. ‖ Ward, ii. 204.

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from the moon to give to the Nāgas, or serpent deities, as the price to be paid for his mother's release from servitude. Indra tried to induce him not to give it to them lest they, becoming immortal, should oust him from his throne. Garuda would not consent to this arrangement, but told Indra that after it was given to the snakes he could steal it from them. Garuda therefore placed the Amrita in a vessel on the grass, and whilst the Nagas were bathing, Indra stole it. They, thinking that the ambrosia must be on the Kusa grass, licked it; the sharp grass slit their tongues, and hence the serpents' tongues are forked; and the grass, having been touched by the Amrita, is holy.

THE FIG TREE.

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CHAPTER X.

MISCELLANEOUS MINOR DEITIES.

1. SHITALA.

SHITALA is the Bengali name for the small-pox, and for the deity who is supposed to have charge of that disease. The meaning of the word is "She who makes cold." This goddess is represented as a golden-complexioned woman sitting on a lotus, or riding on an ass, dressed in red clothes. Before an image of this kind, or more commonly a pan of water merely, Shitala is worshipped in the hope that she will preserve her worshippers from this dire disease.

In the spring of the year the Hindus were in the habit of inoculating their children who were about two years of age; on which occasion the Brāhman who performed the operation made presents to render Shitala propitious, and promised in case the work was successful to give still greater gifts. At the close of the operation the flowers that were presented to the goddess were placed in the hair of the child as a charm. On behalf of those afflicted with small-pox, offerings are made daily; and

when the patient is thought to be dangerously ill, he is placed in front of an image of Shitala, bathed in, and given to drink, water that has been offered to her. Beggars go about with a stone, partly gilded, which they teach is sacred to Shitala, and, singing her praises, receive presents from the superstitious.*

2. MANASĀ.

Manasā is the sister of Vasuki, the King of the Snakes; the wife of Jaratkāru, a sage; and being the Queen of the Snakes is regarded as the protectress of men from those reptiles. Another name by which she is known is Vishahara, "the destroyer of poison." Generally offerings are made to her without any image being made, a branch of a tree, a pan of water, an earthen snake being her representatives; when her image is made, it is that of a woman clothed with snakes, sitting on a lotus, or standing upon a snake. A song founded upon the following story concludes the worship of this deity.

MANASĀ.

A merchant named Chānda not only refused to worship Manasā, but professed the profoundest contempt for her. In process of time six of his sons died from snake-bites. To avoid a similar fate, his eldest son Lakindara dwelt in an iron house; but Manasā caused a snake

* Ward, ii. 139.

to enter through a crevice, which bit him on his wedding-day and caused his death too. His widow, however, escaped, and went weeping to her mother-in-law, who, with the neighbours, vainly tried to induce Chanda to propitiate the goddess through whose influence so much evil had come to the family. Manasā herself urged his friends to prevail upon him not to remain so hostile to her. At last he so far yielded to their wishes as to throw a single flower with his left hand towards her image, which so delighted her that she restored his sons to life, and from that time, as men came to know of her power, her worship has become celebrated.*

The Mahābhārata gives the following particulars regarding her marriage. Jagatkāru, her husband, was an eminent sage, who had practised great austerities, bathed in all the holy tanks, abstained from matrimony, and, as a result of his penance and fasting, had a dry and shrivelled body. In the course of his wanderings, coming to a place where he saw a number of men hanging from a tree with their heads downwards over a deep abyss, with a rat gnawing at the rope by which they were suspended, he learned that they were his own ancestors, doomed to endure this misery because, their children being dead, they had no one to release them (*i.e.* by performing certain religious ceremonies); and he, who by having a son might have set them free, was given up to a life of austerity and refused to marry. When they are told that Jagatkāru is the man through whose abstinence they are suffering, they entreat him to marry and secure their deliverance. He consents to do so on condition that the parents of the girl he marries give her to him willingly. Vasuki hearing of this, offers his sister to the sage, who marries her and has a son named Āsika. This son effected the deliverance of his ancestors, and also rendered good service to the serpent race in saving them from destruction when Janamejaya made a great sacrifice of snakes, and was wishful to exterminate them.

* Ward, ii. 142.

3. SASTĪ.

Sastī is peculiarly the goddess of married women; she is the giver of children, assists at childbirth, and is the guardian of young children. She is represented as a golden-complexioned woman with a child in her arms, riding upon a cat; hence no Hindu woman would under any circumstances injure that animal, lest she should offend this goddess and be made to suffer for it. Six times a year festivals in honour of Sastī are held; in addition to which, women who have lost all their children by death worship her monthly. When a child is six days old, the father worships her; and when three weeks old, the mother presents offerings to her. The ordinary representative of Sastī is a stone about the size of a man's head placed under a banyan tree, which is decorated with flowers, and offerings of rice, fruit, &c., are made to it.*

SASTĪ.

4. THE SHĀLGRĀMA.

By the worshippers of Vishnu, the Shālgrāma is regarded as a most sacred object. It does not derive its sacredness from certain consecrating rites, as images and other representatives of deities, but is believed to be inherently holy. It is a black

* Ward, ii. 143.

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ammonite, though the Hindus declare it is a stone, found in Mount Gandaki in Nepal. The popular belief is that in this mountain there are multitudes of insects which perforate the stones; and they when perforated, falling into the river Gandaka, are taken out by means of nets. The more common ones are about the size of a watch, and their price varies according to their size, hollowness, and inside colouring, according to which peculiarities special names are given. For the rarer kinds as much as Rs. 2000 are given; and when it is remembered that it is believed that the possessor of one of these ammonites, and a shell called Dakshināvarta (*i.e.* a shell whose convolutions are towards the right), can never be poor, it is not to be wondered at that large prices should be paid for them. As it is also believed that in parting with them they invite misfortune, it is natural that those possessing should wish to retain them; to sell them for gain is regarded as a most dishonourable deed.

A reason for the sacredness of the Shālgrāma is found in the 'Bhāgavata Purāna.' Sani commenced his reign with a request to Brahmā to become subject to him; Brahmā referred him to Vishnu, who asked him to call upon him the next day. When he called, finding that Vishnu had transformed himself into a mountain, he became a worm named Vajrakīta, and afflicted Vishnu for twelve years. At the expiration of that time Vishnu resumed his proper shape, and ordered that henceforth the stones of this mountain (Gandaki) should be worshipped as representatives of himself.*

The Brāhmans usually worship Vishnu in this form in their daily *puja* at home. In the hot season a vessel of water is suspended over the Shālgrāma, and the water continually dropping on it keeps it cool; another vessel is placed under it to catch the water, which is drunk in the evening by the worshipper. The marks of it are shown to men when dying, in the belief that the concentration of the mind on them at this time will ensure the soul a safe passage to Vishnu's heaven.†

* For another account of the origin of the worship of the Shālgrāma, see the account of Tulsi, chap. ix.

† Ward, ii. 221.

5. THE DHENKI.

The Dhenki is a log of wood fixed to a pivot, used for husking rice, pounding bricks to powder, &c. It is generally worked by women, who, by standing on the one end, raise it to a certain height and then let it fall by its own weight. It is said to be the Vāhan or vehicle of Nārada, and it is believed that owing to a blessing pronounced upon it by him, it became an object of worship. A religious teacher, when initiating a disciple into the mysteries of Hinduism, told him to say, "Dhenki, Dhenki." Nārada, hearing this, was delighted, and coming upon his Vāhan gave him another incantation by which he became perfect and was admitted into heaven. It is worshipped at the time of marriage, at the investiture of a son with the Poita or Brāhmanical thread, at the ceremony of giving rice to a child and on other festive occasions. At the close of the last century a Rāja of Naladanga is said to have spent Rs. 300,000 in celebrating the worship of the Dhenki.

6. KA? WHO?

The Athenians were not alone in worshipping the "Unknown God." "The authors of the Brāhmanas had so completely broken with the past, that, forgetful of the poetical character of the hymns (of the Vedas), and the yearning of the poets after the unknown god, they exalted the interrogative pronoun itself into a deity, and acknowledged a god, Ka? or 'Who?' In the 'Taittiriya Brāhmana,' in the 'Kanshītaki Brāhmana,' in the 'Tāndya Brāhmana,' and in the 'Satapatha Brāhmana,' wherever interrogative verses occur, the author states that Ka is Prajāpati, or the lord of creatures. Nor did they stop here. Some of the hymns in which the interrogative pronoun occurred were called Kadvat, *i.e.* having kad or quid. But soon a new adjective was formed, and not only the hymns, but the sacrifices also, offered to the god, were called Kāya, or 'Who-ish.' At the time of

Pānini (the great grammarian), this word had acquired such legitimacy as to call for a separate rule explaining its formation. The commentator here explains Ka by Brāhman. After this we can hardly wonder that in the later Sanskrit literature of the Purānas, Ka appears as a recognised god, with a genealogy of his own, perhaps even a wife; and that in the laws of Manu one of the recognised forms of marriage, generally known by the name of the Prajāpati marriage, occurs under the monstrous title of Kāya."* In the Mahābhārata Ka is identified with Daksha, and in the 'Bhāgavata Purāna' it is applied to Kasyapa, probably on account of their similarity to Prajāpati.

* Max Müller, quoted in Dowson's 'Classical Dictionary,' s. v. "Ka?"

THE LOTUS.

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CHAPTER XI.

SUPERHUMAN, THOUGH NOT DIVINE BEINGS.

I. APSARASAS, GANDHARVAS, AND KINNARAS.

THE Apsarasas are nymphs, the Gandharvas singers of Indra's heaven, and the Kinnaras human beings with horses' heads, who form the band in that of Kuvera. The Apsarasas are not prominent in the Vedas, but Urvasi and a few others are mentioned. In Manu they are said to be the creations of the seven Manus. In the Epic poems they become prominent, and the Rāmāyana and the Purānas attribute their origin to the churning of the ocean. It is said that when they came forth from the waters, neither the gods nor the Asuras would have them for wives, so they became common to all. They have the appellations "wives of the gods," and "daughters of pleasure."

> "Then from the agitated deep up sprung
> The legion of Apsarasas, so named
> That to the watery element they owed
> Their being. Myriads were they born, and all
> In vestures heavenly clad, and heavenly gems;
> Yet more divine their native semblance, rich
> With all the gifts of grace, of youth and beauty:
> A train innumerous followed; yet thus fair,
> Nor god nor demon sought their wedded love:
> Thus, Rāghava! they still remain—their charms
> The common treasure of the host of heaven."

"In the Purānas various ganās or classes of them are mentioned; the 'Vayu Purana' enumerates fourteen, the 'Hari Vansa' seven. They are again distinguished as being *daivika*, 'divine,' or *laukika*, 'worldly.' The former are said to be ten in number, and the latter thirty-four, and these are the heavenly charmers

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who fascinated heroes, as Urvasi, and allured austere sages from their devotions and penances, as Menaka and Rembhā. The 'Kasi Khand' says there are thirty-five millions of them, but only one thousand and sixty are the principal. The Apsarasas, then, are fairy-like beings, beautiful and voluptuous. They are the wives or mistresses of the Gandharvas, and are not prudish in the dispensation of their favours. Their amours on earth have been numerous, and they are the rewards in Indra's paradise held out to heroes who fall in battle. They have the power of changing their forms and give good luck to whom they favour." *

The 'Vishnu Purāna' † says that the Gandharvas were the offspring of Brahmā. "The Gandharvas were next born, imbibing melody; drinking of the goddess of speech, they were born, and thence their appellation (gām dhayantah, 'drinking speech')." The same Purāna ‡ makes them the descendants of Kasyapa and Arishtā, and Brahmā is said to be their grandsire. The 'Padma Purāna' speaks of them as the children of Vach. According to the 'Vishnu Purāna,' the 'Gandharvas, called Mauneyas (or sons of the Muni Kasyapa), who were sixty millions in number, had defeated the Nāgas or snake gods, and seized upon their most precious jewels and usurped their dominion." The snakes resorted to Vishnu for help, who informed them that he would enter into Purukutsa and then destroy the Gandharvas. The Nāgas sent their sister Narmadā, the personified river Nerbudda, to ask the aid of Purukutsa, who succeeded in her work, and the Gandharvas were destroyed. As a reward the Nāgas gave this power to Narmadā, that whoever worshipped her and called upon her name should be safe from the poison of snakes and all other poison too.

In the 'Satapatha Brāhmana,' and the Purānas, is a story of Pururavas and the Apsaras Urvasi which will give some idea of the character of these beings in Hindu Mythology. Urvasi was compelled to leave heaven owing to the imprecation of Mitra and Varuna. She was seen and loved by Pururavas, the son of

* Dowson, *s. v.* † Page 41. ‡ Page 150.

Budha by the daughter of Manu, and agreed to live with him on certain conditions. She said: "I have two rams which must always remain near me day and night; you must never be seen by me undressed, and I must eat only *ghī*, or clarified butter." The inhabitants of heaven were anxious for Urvasi's return, so the Gandharvas came by night and stole her rams; as Purūravas in his attempt to rescue them rushed into Urvasi's room undressed, a flash of lightning filled the room, and being seen by the nymph, the condition under which she consented to remain with him being broken, she returned to heaven. Purūravas was distracted at the loss of his bride, and wandered about searching for her; when he found her, she promised to meet him yearly and present him with a son. After five annual visits she told him that if he would offer a sacrifice with the express object of gaining her, his effort would be successful. He made the attempt, became a Gandharva, and gained eternal possession of her love.

2. RĀKSHASAS.

These formidable beings form a prominent feature in Hindu legend. They are all Brāhmans, yet are described as cannibals. Pārvati gave to the whole tribe the power to arrive at maturity the moment they were born. They had the power of assuming any form at will; and we read of them now as horses, now as buffaloes, now as tigers. Some of them had as many as a hundred heads. Amongst the more noted of these beings was Rāvana, Rāma's foe; and his relatives Kumbhakarna, Vibhishena, Indrajit, &c.

Kumbhakarna, the brother of Rāvana, immediately he was born, stretched forth his arms and gathered everything into his mouth that he could reach. At one time he seized five hundred nymphs from Indra's heaven; at another time the wives of a hundred sages, and cows and Brāhmans innumerable. Brahmā threatened to destroy him, unless he became more moderate in his demands; he, therefore, commenced a life of austerity that continued for ten thousand years, which terrified the gods lest he should have power to swallow up everything, gods and men

included. In their distress they appealed to Brahmā, who caused Sarasvati to enter Kumbhakarna and induce him to ask as a boon that he might sleep eternally. This plan was successful. But the friends of the Rākshasas were not pleased with the result, and asked Brahmā that he might awake for a day at the end of each half-year and eat as much as he wished. This request was acceded to. His house in Lanka is said to have been 20,000 miles long; but Lanka itself, according to the Rāmāyana, was only 800 miles in circumference.*

The Rākshasas "have been classified as of three sorts, one as a set of beings like the Yākshas," or supernatural attendants on Kuvera, the god of wealth,—these were harmless and inoffensive beings; another as a sort of Titans, or enemies of the gods; and lastly, in the common acceptation of the term, demons and fiends who haunt cemeteries, disturb sacrifices, harass devout men, animate dead bodies, devour human beings, and vex and afflict mankind in all sorts of ways. These last are the Rākshasas, of whom Rāvana was chief; and according to some authorities, they are descended, like Rāvana himself, from Pulastya. According to other authorities, they sprang from Brahmā's foot. The 'Vishnu Purāna' makes them descendants of Kasyapa and Khasā, a daughter of Daksha, through their son Rākshas; and the Rāmāyana states that when Brahmā created the waters, he formed certain beings to gnaw them who were called Rākshasas. It is thought that the Rākshasas of the Epic poems were the rude barbarian races of India, who were subdued by the Aryans.†

The name Bhuta is given to a similar class of beings who are the attendants of Siva: hence Bhuta Nātha, Lord of Spirits, is one of Siva's many names; and the term Pisāchas is applied to a class if possible more offensive than the Rākshasas described above.

* Ward, ii. 148. † Dowson, *s. v.*

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